

Student warned of Rabin murder two months in advance

LONDON (AP) — A student from a religious seminary warned that fellow students were discussing whether to assassinate Yitzhak Rabin just weeks before the assassination took place, an Israeli extremist expert said.

"He said he wanted to talk to me right away because he was afraid people were now considering the possibility of the assassination of (Foreign Minister Shimshon) Peres and Mr. Rabin," Ehud Sprinzak, Israel's foremost expert on Jewish extremism, said of the call he received in September.

Yigal Amir, who opposed Mr. Rabin's policies of releasing land to the Palestinians, confessed to shooting the Israeli prime minister dead on Nov. 4 after a peace rally.

Mr. Sprinzak told the British Broadcasting Corporation he warned Mr. Rabin after the call, but the prime minister refused to take threats from Jews seriously. Israel's security service reportedly ignored other warnings from one of Amir's fellow university students last summer.

Mr. Sprinzak said the caller identified himself only as studying at the Joseph Lives On Seminary in the West Bank city of Nablus. Dan Marantz, a former student, told the Associated Press after the assassination that Amir, 25, was known to visit the seminary.

Mr. Sprinzak asked the caller if he had rabbinical approval. "He said there is no longer any problem with the rabbis."

Police have questioned rabbis about whether anyone gave Amir the go-ahead, but no one has been arrested. Some rabbis had defined Mr. Rabin as a persecutor or a collaborator, both terms that would have brought about a death sentence according to ancient Jewish law.

The Nablus seminary's principal, Eli Rosenberg, told the AP last month that his teachers would never have counselled Mr. Rabin's death. He would have defined Mr. Rabin as an "unholy conspirator," but would have avoided terms that implied a death sentence.

Israel spends \$100m to revamp Nazareth

NAZARETH (AP) — Now that Israel is giving Bethlehem to the Palestinians, it is spending \$100 million to turn the town of Jesus' youth — Nazareth — into a tourist attraction.

Nestled in a horseshoe-shaped valley in the Galilee in northern Israel, the city of 60,000 needs some work. Its roads are often clogged with traffic jams and a maze of TV antennas hide church steeples from view.

"It's got an image problem," said tour guide Yadin Roman.

Though some one million tourists visit this city every year, Mayor Ramez Jarissi said most only stay a few hours, long enough to visit the religious and historical sites.

The government hopes to double the number of tourists by the end of the century. It plans to invest \$100 million to widen streets, renovate the market and restore 19th-century Venetian-style homes that have ceiling frescoes and red tile roofs.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111/19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:00	Shelly Duvall's Bedtime Stories
14:30	Ricky Rick
14:45	Playabout
15:15	Hey Dad
15:45	Doc — Discover Magazine
16:00	The Adventures of the Black Stallion
16:30	Sky Trackers
17:00	Children's programme — Fractiles
17:30	Star Trek
22:25	News in English
22:25	Anna
23:15	The American Chari Show
23:59	New York Undercover

PRAYER TIMES

05:00	Fajr (Sunni)
06:30	Dhuhr
14:15	Asr
16:30	Maghreb
18:00	Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swefi, Tel: 810740
Assumption of God Church, Tel:
632785
St. Joseph Church Tel: 624500,
Church of the Annunciation Tel:
637440.
De La Salle Church Tel: 661757
Terrassants Church Tel: 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel:
623541.
Anglican Church Tel: 652426
Armenian Catholic Church Tel:
77131.
American Orthodox Church Tel:
775361.
St. Ephraim Church Tel: 771751.
Amman International Church Tel:
623226.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel:
X24328.
German-speaking Evangelical Con-
gregation Tel: X45457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel: 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel: 673691,
The Evangelical Local Church in
Amman Tel: 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Temperatures are expected to rise slightly with skies partly cloudy and winds northwesterly light to

Iraqi children face death — CARE

AMMAN (J.T.) — Iraq is currently facing a major battle to prevent the deaths of thousands of children from severe malnutrition, according to CARE Australia representative who has just returned from the country.

Speaking on his arrival in Amman, after a week-long visit to Iraq CARE Australia's Middle East regional director, Robert Yallop, said the humanitarian situation in the country was horrific.

"I spent several days visiting paediatric hospitals, schools and water treatment facilities and the situation was appalling. I have visited

Iraq regularly over the past four and a half years and this time have been shocked and appalled by the present state of suffering.

"The humanitarian situation has been deteriorating steadily over the past five years of sanctions. The world has forgotten what is happening in Iraq," said Mr. Yallop.

"The situation has deteriorated now to the point where the international community must act immediately to prevent thousands of children dying from malnutrition.

Mr. Yallop, who established CARE's humanitarian operations in Iraq after the

Gulf war, said he was deeply shocked by the situation facing families, especially children.

"I have a three-year-old son who weighs about thirteen kilos," Mr. Yallop said. "I saw children the same age as my son in hospitals in Iraq who weighed five and six kilos. It simply should not be."

With the support of the Dutch government, CARE Australia is immediately starting a supplementary feeding project in paediatric hospitals in 14 provinces in central and southern Iraq.

Mr. Yallop said CARE will provide milk, cheese and high energy biscuits to approximately 4,500 malnourished children each day, for the coming six months, he said.

"Five years of sanctions have prevented Iraq from selling oil and have resulted in a crisis in the supply of food and medicine within Iraq," said Mr. Yallop. "Only when Iraq can sell oil freely and purchase food and medicine can the humanitarian disaster end."

"This should not be viewed as a political issue, but simply an issue of humanity."

Ahmar confirms 'tribal clashes' on border

DUBAI (R) — A Saudi newspaper on Sunday quoted a senior Yemeni official as saying tribal clashes took place recently along the border between Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

Sheikh Abdullah Al Ahmar, speaker of the Yemeni Parliament, told Arab News: "The recent fighting between members of some tribes along the border will not affect the work of different panels assigned to draw borders between the two countries."

Sheikh Ahmar, in the first official admission of trouble along the border, did not

elaborate in his remarks to the English-language Saudi daily.

Reports earlier this week by sources close to Yemen spoke of fresh clashes along the disputed Saudi-Yemen border.

The Saudi Defence Ministry later said the reports were "absolutely untrue."

Sheikh Ahmar arrived in the Saudi capital Riyadh on Saturday at the head of a senior Yemeni delegation for talks with Saudi officials on the disputed border.

Sheikh Ahmar and Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan head the Saudi-Yemeni

higher committee entrusted with reviewing progress by several side committees charged with demarcating the border and boosting economic and other ties.

Sanna and Riyad formed the committees after reaching a border accord in February which followed three months of clashes and tension along the border, parts of which are potentially rich in oil and gas.

Arab News quoted Prince Sultan as saying the higher committee's meeting "was not held due to any difficulties or obstacles faced by joint panels set up for settling the border dispute."

But he said it was agreed during Saturday's talks to set up new follow-up panels under the higher committee and that they would start "their mission within a few months," Arab News reported.

Prince Sultan said the border talks were "moving in the right direction in the interest of the two sides."

The newspaper also quoted Yemeni Interim Minister Hussein Al-Sabah, who is accompanying Sheikh Ahmar as saying political will and good intentions would "help resolve outstanding problems."

Al Dustour acquitted in slander case filed by Parliament member

By Ghaliya Alul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The first instance court on Saturday acquitted the Jordan Press and Publishing Company, which publishes the Al Dustour daily from all charges levelled against it by member of the Lower House of Parliament Fouzi Tueimeh for publishing an article and a caricature

which he alleged were slanders to him. Yasser Sunnuqrot, the attorney representing the newspaper, said Sunday.

Mr. Tueimeh's attorney said that he would appeal the verdict.

Mr. Sunnuqrot told the Jordan Times that Dr. Tueimeh had sued Al Dustour for six years and had been allowed to meet supporters while under house arrest, his movement said on Saturday.

Mr. Sunnuqrot said that the newspaper did not violate the Press and Publications Law, and stressed that neither

er the article nor the cartoon mentioned Dr. Tueimeh's name and did not have anything to do with him or any other person.

However, he added, the article was geared towards raising public awareness of the importance of elections, and that people should look for the truth without always believing slogans.

Mr. Sunnuqrot added that defence witnesses were experts in journalism and proved that the article carried general information which was meant to raise people's awareness. They also said that cartoons usually have different interpretations, and that one did not hurt anyone.

Our witnesses were very educated people, university doctors, professors and journalists. They all proved that the article was general, in nature, said Mr. Sunnuqrot.

He said that the cartoon included a character called "Um Fouzi," (Fouzi's mother), and that Dr. Tueimeh had thought it was meant against him, but then

he added that he respected the judicial integrity and was happy with the verdict as it upheld the freedom of the press.

"I am happy with the result as this is a support of the freedom of the press," he added.

and visitors — will be counted over the coming 10 days based on the night of Dec. 16-17," he said. UAE nationals and diplomats living abroad would also be counted.

The population has been growing by more than five per cent annually over the past four years, down from an average 47 per cent in the early 1970s after foreigners began arriving to take up menial or skilled work which nationals were either unwilling or unqualified to do.

Economic growth in the UAE, a major regional trading and re-export hub, has slowed in recent years because of the general weakness in oil prices in the late 1980s.

"I hail the spirit of the census-takers who, despite the prevailing weather conditions, have shown their willingness to start the process," said Mohammad Abdul Aziz Al Swaidi, director of the Central Census Department at the Ministry of Planning. "All people present in the UAE — nationals, residents

Rain-lashed UAE takes census

By Rama Sabbagh
Reuter

DUBAI — Government officials, some using boats and helicopters to reach remote areas cut off by the heaviest rain in living memory, fanned out across the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Sunday to count a population in which three in every four is a foreigner.

Some 6,500 census-takers were collecting information in the UAE's fourth national census since 1971 when seven Arab emirates collectively known as the Trucial States formed a federation.

The last census in 1985 put the population at 1,622,464, from 180,226 in 1968, an increase due to an oil boom in

which foreign labourers and professionals flocked to the Gulf in the early 1970s.

Unofficial figures estimated the total population at 2.23 million in 1992. Some 526,280 were UAE nationals and the rest expatriates, mainly Asians, who transformed the collection of desert sheikdoms into a modern state built with petro-dollars.

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This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel: (06) 53200-5, where it should always be verified.

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel: (06) 53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

(Terminal 1)

06:15 Beiru (RJ)

12:00 Frankfurt, London (RJ)

12:15 Cairo (RJ)

16:30 Amsterdam (RJ)

16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

19:00 Paris, Damascus (RJ)

19:45 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)

Siblings sentenced to death for murder

By Rana Husseini
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A man and a woman aged 19 and 29 Sunday were sentenced to death by the Criminal Court for killing a 55-year-old man in Irbid in August of last year.

Nimer Ahmad Faris Bashawi and his sister Hanieh, were found guilty of murdering Jamil Faleh Abdul Kader Azam, Hanieh's husband, at a farm in Netmeh over family problems, court documents said.

According to the court, Hanieh, the mother of four, often quarreled with her husband. One week before the murder, the victim left his home and went in a farm in Irbid near Neimeh town where he worked as guard, the document said.

On Aug. 16, one day before the murder, the court said, Hanieh and Nimer plotted to kill Jamil "to get rid of him because of the family problem." They went to the farm where Jamil was employed, the document said.

The three had dinner and settled their problem, the court said. According to the court, Jamil went to sleep, and Hanieh and Nimer struck Jamil on the head several times with a meat cleaver, dragged his body outside, dug a hole and buried him in manure.

Hanieh and Nimer went to Al Khaldieh police in Irbid and turned themselves in, each claiming to have committed the crime, the charge sheet said.

On Saturday, the Criminal Court sentenced a 30-year-old man to death for raping

and murdering an Iraqi woman in her house in Sabah in June.

According to court documents, the defendant Ali Hamid went to the home of Salimeh Hsoun, a 30-year-old mother of a toddler, and raped her at knife point.

The victim threatened Ali saying that she was going to inform her husband of the rape, the court document said.

The convict told the authorities that he had to kill her to conceal the rape and so he slashed her throat, the document added.

The defendant then fled the house, the document said. He was apprehended by authorities a week later.

Both sentences will be automatically reviewed by the Court of Cassation in the next 15 days.

Cabinet approves investment regulation to allow wider foreign ownership

AMMAN (J.T.) — A regulation aimed at attracting foreign investors to Jordan as approved by the Cabinet Saturday evening is expected to open doors to foreign investors and hopefully push the Kingdom's drive to serve as a unique centre for investments in the entire region. Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abu Ragheb said Sunday.

The government Saturday evening approved a regulation which allows wider foreign ownership and direct entry into the

Amman Financial Market (AFM), Jordan's stock market, to help attract foreign capital.

The minister said the regulation is in accordance with the Investment Promotion Law which offers non-Jordanian investors the opportunity to explore potential areas for their investments in the Kingdom.

He said non-Jordanian investors will benefit from various incentives provided for under the new investment promotion law.

Minister of Finance Basel Jaradeh said the new regulation helps to serve the system of transparency inherent in the Investment Promotion Law to provide opportunities for substantial foreign investment at a time when investors will also benefit from a reduced tax system, also part of the law.

Parliament passed the Investment Promotion Law in advance of the Middle East and North Africa economic summit last October.

Police arrest man in shooting death of sister

By Rana Husseini
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Officials Sunday disclosed that a 23-year-old man was arrested last week for killing his divorced sister in Jabal Nasser on Dec. 12.

According to Prosecutor General Ali Abu Hujeileh, Mohammad A., turned himself in to police shortly after shooting his sister Intisar A., 28, in the head. The woman died instantly, he added.

Mt. Abu Hujeileh said that Mohammad told police that he killed his divorced sister, who was married and divorced several times, because she "was involved in several immoral relations."

ships during the past six years."

On Dec. 12, the night of the murder, Mr. Abu Hujeileh said, the suspect met his sister at their uncle's home by coincidence, and advised her to live with him or with his father.

He also advised her to "change her behaviour," but she refused and told him that she was free to do what she wanted to do and to live where she wished.

An argument erupted, and Mohammad shot his sister in the head," Mr. Abu Hujeileh told the Jordan Times.

According to the prosecutor general, the case will be transferred to the Criminal

Court in two weeks.

Intisar became the 10th woman reportedly killed in a "crime of honour" in the Kingdom this year.

Meanwhile, police Sunday were waiting for autopsy results to determine if an Egyptian man who was found dead in Sweifieh Friday was murdered or died of natural causes, official sources said.

Mohammad Mahmoud Ali, 24, was found dead near Abdul Ruhman Mosque in Sweifieh.

Police said the deceased had injuries to his face and mouth but were unable at the time of the discovery of the body to determine the cause of the death.

'95 road accidents claim 399 lives

AMMAN (Petra) — A total of 23,292 road accidents occurred in Jordan between January 1995 and the middle of December, according to Brigadier Nimer Hmoud, head of the traffic division of the Public Security Department (PSD) Sunday.

The accidents resulted in the death of 399 people and the injury of 9,279. Brig. Hmoud said on the eve of Arab Police Day Monday.

The number of accidents registered a 16.2 per cent increase over the number of accidents in the same period last year, he added.

The increase in accidents stem from the fact that Jordan has no programmes for spreading awareness among the public about traffic and guidance against accidents, programmes which should start at school, the PSD official said.

It is for this reason that the traffic department has recently taken upon itself this task, and through cooperation with Jordan Television and the press, it has been presenting programmes and lectures on road safety, as well as giving lectures to teachers to spread traffic awareness among school students, Brig. Hmoud said.

The department has also been taking measures to reduce road accidents through

vehicle roadworthiness regulations and by introducing strict rules against violators of traffic laws, especially speeding, he added.

Brig. Hmoud said the employment of police helicopters has played a key role in controlling traffic on the main streets of Amman and along the highways.

Speaking on the same occasion, Colonel Nazih Shreideh, director of the PSD narcotics department said the number of Jordanians arrested in drug cases has risen from 60 in 1982 to 704 in 1995.

Over the past five years the PSD has seized a total of 19,886 kilogrammes (kgs) of hashish, 66 kgs of heroin, 12 kgs of opium, 54 grammes of cocaine and 1,229,076 drug pills, according to Col. Shreideh.

Also Sunday, PSD Director General Abdul Rahman Al Adwan received a number of special police vehicles which came as a gift from the German government to the narcotics division and expressed Jordan's appreciation of the gift.

The German embassy's chargé d'affaires Michael Bock, who presented the gift, said he was satisfied with the strong ties of cooperation between Germany and Jordan in security matters.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

* "Germinal" at the French Cultural Centre at 8.00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

* Christmas carols by the International Community School Choir at the Marriott and Forte Grand Hotel at 5.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.

BAZAAR

* Christmas bazaar at the Greek Orthodox Church in the Kuwayat Neighbourhood, Fuheis (until Dec. 22).

LECTURE

* "Orwell's Animal Farm" by Dr. Nicholas Linfield at the British Cultural Centre at 5.00 p.m.

Abu Rishteh claims interview statements were based on Islamic Sharia rights

By Rana Husseini
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Muslim militant Abu Rishteh, who is being tried at the military court for slandering His Majesty King Hussein, Sunday told the tribunal that the statements he made to the weekly Al Hiwar newspaper in October, over which he is being charged, were based on interpretations of the Islamic Sharia.

Mr. Abu Rishteh, spokesman of the illegal Hezb Al Tahrir Party, repeated his plea of innocence on charges of slandering the King and belonging to an illegal organisation, and told the court that he was only following his right to question officials as embedded in the Sharia.

Asked by the court whether he meant to slander the King or individuals who see in the U.S., Britain, Russia, France and the rest of the infidel colonial countries their own Gods? This is treason. It is a betrayal of every Muslim and one of the main topics in the Islamic jurisdiction.

Mr. Abu Rishteh's attorney, Mohammad Salameh Dweik and Abdul Fatah

Lafi asked the court to call four witnesses to testify in the case.

The four witnesses, according to the attorneys, include Chief Islamic Justice Sheikh Izzeddin Al Khatib Al Tamimi, advisor to the King, Sheikh Abdul Aziz Khayat, a former Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Munjid Namari, reporter of Al Hiwar newspaper who interviewed Mr. Abu Rishteh, and an expert from the Ministry of Information.

Mr. Abu Rishteh's attorney, Mohammad Salameh Dweik and Abdul Fatah

asked for Sheikhs Tamimi and Khayat to prove that Mr. Abu Rishteh was speaking in accordance to Islamic Sharia and the holy Koran and that he did not intend to slander the King.

He added that the defence's call for an information expert from the Ministry of Information is to explain the legal procedures for the printing of such an article in a weekly newspaper.

Presiding Judge Hafez Amin agreed to call the witnesses for the next session on Dec. 24.

UNDP to provide grant for protection of Aqaba coral reef

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Princess Basma Bint Ali, chairperson of the Jordan Royal Ecological Diving Society (JREDS) and Jorgen Lissner, resident representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Sunday signed a memorandum of agreement by which UNDP will provide a grant of \$50,000 to the JREDS to implement a "Comprehensive Public Awareness and Coral Reef Rehabilitation Research and Conservation Project in Aqaba," a UNDP statement said.

This grant is part of the Global Environment Facility, Small Grants Programme, of the U.N. agency.

The project will be implemented by the Jordan Royal Ecological Diving Society, a non-governmental organization (NGO) initiated in 1994 by a group of young Jordanian divers who felt the need to protect Aqaba's rich marine life from further destruction and pollution, the statement said.

The society will cooperate with the Marine Science

Station, Aqaba Regional Authority, Naval Forces, Aqaba Ports Corporation, Fishermen's Union, Diving Centres and other NGOs.

According to UNDP, the project objectives are:

Conserving the biodiversity and reducing pollution to international waters;

To educate the general public on the importance of Jordan's marine environment, and how it is globally connected to, and affected by other systems;

To conduct outreach educational programmes for children across the Kingdom, that will demonstrate their relation to the health of the coral reefs;

To advance the knowledge and understanding of the sea, through the promotion of scientific research, data gathering, inventory preparation, and training programmes on the national and regional level;

To develop close working relations between the governmental institutions, industrial developers, scientific and local communities, as well as environmentalists, to ensure sustainable

development and proper resource management; and

To establish dialogue and cooperation with international organisations which share similar interests.

The Global Environment Facility — Small Grants

Programme (GEF/SGP) was initiated in Jordan by the UNDP in November 1992, as a pilot phase programme to provide support for small-scale community-based activities that address environmental problems in four priority areas according to the statement.

global warming, loss of

biodiversity, pollution of

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In addition, the GEF/SGP

will support the implementation of

environmental projects in

the four priority areas

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Indian parties bash U.S. over nuclear test report

NEW DELHI (R) - India's opposition parties angrily accused the United States Sunday of trying to suppress the country's atomic weapons capability as an opinion poll showed most Indians would approve of a nuclear test.

The outpouring of support for the nation's independent nuclear arms policy followed a U.S. newspaper report Friday that said India might be preparing its first atomic weapons test in more than two decades.

The Indian government called the New York Times report "highly speculative" but stopped short of an outright denial. Atomic Energy Commission Chairman R. Chidambaran called the report "highly irresponsible."

Diplomats said they had no information indicating a test was imminent but added that the government's statement left the door open to such a possibility.

The reaction of opposition parties and the opinion poll published in India Today magazine underscored a strong national consensus in favour of resisting international efforts, led by Washington, to curb India's nuclear weapons capability.

"This is a question of national security on which there must not be any compromise," Janata Dal leader Sharad Yadav said. "The government should fight such pressure from the U.S."

India exploded a nuclear device in 1974, but like Pakistan denies having nuclear weapons. U.S. Officials say the two neighbouring nations, which have fought three wars since independence in 1947, could quickly assemble nuclear arms.

The India Today survey, commissioned by private polling firm Marg, showed 62 per cent of the respondents would approve if India exploded an atom

bomb to develop its nuclear weapons capability. Thirty-five per cent would disapprove.

The survey of 2,000 adults in nine major cities was carried out on Dec. 5 and 7, before the New York Times story.

Among those who would approve of a test, 54 per cent said they would favour developing nuclear weapons even if it meant that countries such as the United States and Japan would impose sanctions which could affect India's economic growth.

The main reason cited for retaining India's nuclear capability was to protect against nuclear threats from Pakistan and China.

"We do not subscribe to a world in which racial apartheid is replaced by nuclear apartheid," said Jaswant Singh, a leader of the rightwing nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The U.S. newspaper report was sure to thrust the nuclear issue to the forefront of the national political debate as general elections are due by mid-1996 approach, diplomats said.

The main challenger to Mr. Rao's Congress Party, the BJP has staked out a hardline defence stance calling for production of a nuclear test.

"Should India have its second nuclear test, we will demand that Pakistan examine its options in light of the heightened threat to our national security," Mushahid Hussain, spokesman for the opposition Pakistan Muslim League Party, told Reuters.

"This is a test case for the West, particularly the United States, since they talk so much on nuclear non-proliferation," he said. "As Pakistanis and Muslims, we feel their concern is selective. Pakistan is targeted, while known nuclear powers like Israel and India are exempted from American pressure."

Pakistan's official response to the New York Times report that India could be preparing for its second nuclear test has been muted.

Opposition parties from the BJP to the Communists lashed out at the New York Times report, claiming it reflected the views of U.S. officials who want India to

sign a global test ban treaty.

At one time a strong supporter of the comprehensive test ban treaty currently under consideration, New Delhi has backtracked and now says it is reviewing its options.

India refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty this year, saying it was discriminatory because it did not require the five acknowledged nuclear powers — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — to dismantle their arsenals.

"If the (New York Times) story was planted with a view to pressuring India, then I find it laughable," the BJP's Singh said. "Vital national interests are vital national interests and cannot be determined by some other country."

Meanwhile Pakistani commentators said Sunday Pakistan might be forced across the nuclear threshold if India goes ahead with reported plans for a nuclear test.

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Pakistan's official response to the New York Times report that India could be preparing for its second nuclear test has been muted.

A Pakistani foreign office spokesman said Saturday that such a test would set back non-proliferation.

"There are no longer major differences between the three parties now," Mr. Kamei said.

Mr. Kamei said the merger could take place sometime around the next general elections. Polls are not due until mid-1997 but observers and many lawmakers expect Mr. Murayama to call elections after next year's budget is passed, possibly by the end of March.

"It is possible that the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the Socialist Party and the Sakigake Party would become one party under a name such as the Liberal Socialist Party," Shizuka Kamei, former LDP transport minister said in a television current affairs programme.

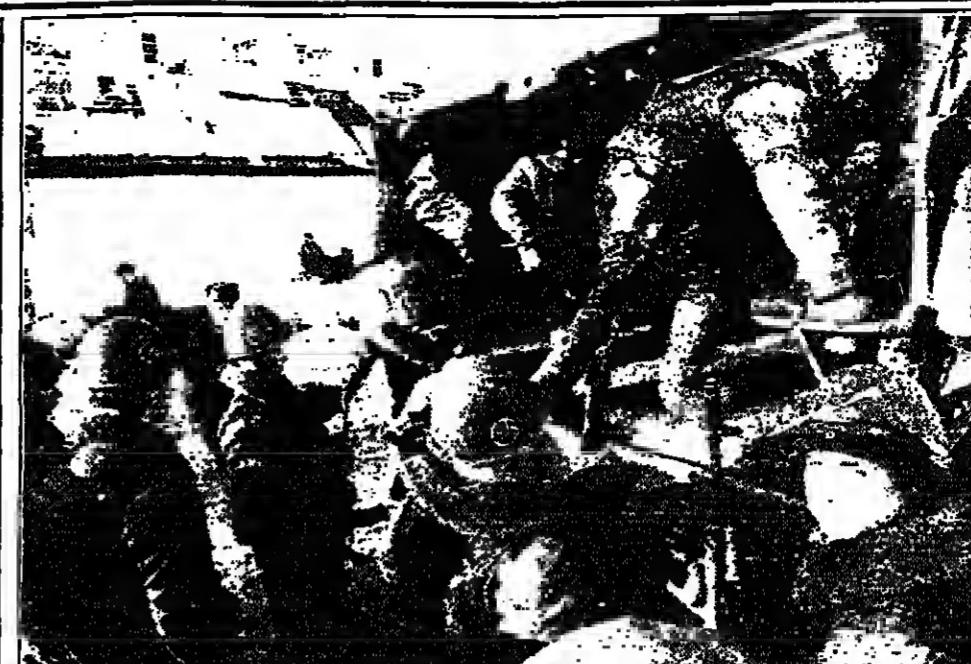
The long-ruling LDP is the dominant force in the three-party ruling coalition formed in June 1994 with Mr. Murayama's Socialist Party and Sakigake, a small group led by Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura.

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Mr. Kamei made the remarks at a time when the main opposition Shinshinto (New Frontier Party) faces a leadership battle.

A party presidential election on Dec. 27 will decide the contest between former Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata and backroom powerbroker Ichiro Ozawa.



RUSSIAN TROOPS ON PATROL: Russian soldiers get into a truck on their way to patrol the streets of the Chechen capital, Grozny, as part of the security measures taken by the Russian government to assure a safe electoral process for Chechen local authorities and Russian State Duma representatives (AFP photo)

Russians under siege in Chechen city

MOSCOW (R) — Rebels harried besieged Russian forces in the second city of the breakaway province of Chechenya Sunday in a fourth day of fighting.

Interfax News Agency said.

Russian servicemen stranded in the buildings of a military headquarters and a railway station in the city of Gudermes were surrounded by the rebels and under fire, Interfax said, quoting the Russian military command in Chechenya.

Interfax said Russian forces suffered no casualties in Gudermes in the last 24 hours, but elsewhere in Chechenya three Russian soldiers had been killed and two wounded in 28 rebel

attacks on Russian positions, 20 of them in the capital Grozny.

There was no independent confirmation of the latest reports.

The rebels, who seek independence and oppose Russia's efforts to stage national and local elections in Chechenya, infiltrated Gudermes Thursday. The city is sealed off by the Russian troops and reporters are barred from approaching it.

In the rest of Russia people were voting for a new State Duma, or lower house of parliament, amid tight security because officials fear rebel guerrilla attacks.

Although the Chechenya fighting did not figure

prominently in the Russian election campaign, it has not helped President Boris Yeltsin's image — nor that of Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and his Our Home Is Russia bloc.

Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov has said 32 Russian soldiers were killed and 41 wounded Thursday in Gudermes.

Interfax News Agency, quoting refugees from Gudermes and soldiers evacuated from there, said the bodies of those killed were lying in the streets. One soldier said the fighting resembled the intense battle for Grozny in January.

There was no independent confirmation of any of the figures.

Linda McCartney has breast tumour removed

LONDON (AFP) — Linda McCartney has successfully undergone an operation to have a "small lump" removed from her breast, her husband Paul McCartney, a former member of the Beatles, said in a statement Sunday. The statement, released by McCartney's agent Geoff Baker, said: "Linda had a scan at the Princess Grace Hospital in London last week and was found to have a small lump in her breast." She has had an operation to remove the lump which was performed successfully. Luckily it was caught in time. The operation on the 53-year-old, who like her husband is a strong supporter of vegetarianism and healthy living, was carried out at London's Princess Grace Hospital, the statement said. It said Linda McCartney had since left the hospital for home, where she was resting. "Breast cancer awareness is something we have been keen to promote, and we would urge anyone with any worries about this to check it out with an early examination with their doctor," the statement said.

Trousers worn by Jim Morrison bring \$43,700

New York (R) — The pair of leather pants that singer Jim Morrison wore on the cover of the Doors album *Absolutely Live* sold for \$43,700 at Sotheby's auction house Saturday. Morrison, leader of the Doors, died of a drug overdose in 1971 at the age of 27. He wore the trousers in 1968. The brown leather pants with a zipper and two buckle straps, which were estimated to bring a price of \$20,000 to \$25,000, were bought by the Hard Rock Cafe. Many items did not attract high enough bids to be sold at Saturday's auction of Hollywood and rock 'n' roll memorabilia. Beatle Paul McCartney's handwritten outline for the order of instruments and vocals on the song *Hey Jude* did not sell when bids reached only \$34,000. It had been estimated at between \$40,000 and \$45,000, the highest priced item in the auction. But Maryland collector Richard Marks was happy with his purchase: John Lennon's knife cleaner and a letter from Yoko Ono describing how often Lennon used it. He paid \$1,340. "It's curious," he said, noting the catalogue description of the antique "doesn't do it justice." An acoustic guitar owned and signed by Elvis Presley did not sell when bids reached only \$43,000. But a giant 30-inch (76 cm) Pepsi bottlecap that Presley also owned and signed — not only with his own name but with the word "bellywash," his nickname for the drink — sold for \$6,037.50.

South Korea on higher alert after North moves planes

SEOUL (R) — The South Korean Air Force is on a higher state of alert after the Communist north deployed more war planes near the demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas, the domestic Yonhap news agency said Sunday.

Yonhap, quoting the joint chiefs of staff, said Pyongyang had recently deployed about 20 more planes in three forward bases, bringing the total to 115 in areas close to the demilitarized zone that has divided the Korean Peninsula since the 1953 Korean war.

Government officials were not available for comment.

"The South Korean air

force has decided to step up various air vigilance operations," Yonhap quoted a joint chiefs of staff officer as saying.

He said the decision was reached after a major commanders meeting Saturday.

Tension between the two Koreas, still technically at war, has reached a new peak in recent weeks with both sides stepping up surveillance.

South Korea's intelligence chief also warned Friday of a threat from the north that have created full-scale security alerts in the south.

South Korea has also become increasingly edgy over reports of a looming famine in the north.

Pavarotti sings the blues with Belgium's taxman

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The Belgian taxman caught up with Italian tenor Luciano Pavarotti Saturday and slapped him with a one million Belgian Franc (\$33,000) bill for two concerts he did five years ago. Prosecutors in Antwerp confirmed that they had opened an investigation into the 60-year-old opera superstar, who was giving a performance in the city Saturday. The singer's entourage said Pavarotti was not personally responsible, and told the tax authorities to contact the Rudas Theatrical Organisation, which has represented his interests for the past 15 years. It is based in Las Vegas, in the U.S. state of Nevada.

Dole outstrips rivals in presidential fund-raising

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. Senate majority leader Bob Dole has raised more than \$24 million for his 1996 presidential bid and aims to have at least two-and-a-half times as much money as his nearest rival.

Sen. Dole's campaign manager Scott Reed told Reuters in an interview late Friday he hoped to reach \$25 million by the end of the year.

Subtracting the money Sen. Dole has already spent on his campaign, he would have \$5 million to \$6 million on hand and get \$9.4 million more in federal matching funds early next year.

"We will have at least two-and-a-half times more than our nearest competitor," Mr. Reed said.

Sen. Dole leads his eight Republican rivals by a wide margin in public opinion polls with the first party preference tests of the presidential campaign in Iowa and New Hampshire only two months away.

The latest polls show Sen. Dole with the support of around 45 per cent of Republican voters with his nearest rival at around 10-12 per cent.

History shows that the leader in the polls and fundraising on the eve of the first party preference votes almost invariably goes on to win his party's presidential nomination.

Texas Senator Phil Gramm had been expected to match Sen. Dole in

fundraising. But the flow of donations to his campaign has slowed and he recently sent supporters a letter asking for "emergency donations" to cover a shortfall.

Sen. Gramm is expected to receive around \$6.5 million in matching funds but is already borrowing against that money to finance an advertising campaign in key states.

Former Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander is also short of money and has been forced to borrow against the matching funds he expects next month. The federal government matches all campaign donations dollar for dollar up to \$250 million.

He has already spent \$7 million, much of it on TV advertising attacking Sen. Dole and Sen. Gramm. He has spent more in Iowa, which stages the first big vote of the campaign next Feb. 12, than did all 13

Republican candidates combined in the 1988 campaign.

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Mr. Forbes

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Accountability stems corruption

NO SOCIETY is different from another when it comes to the presence of individuals or groups that seek influence and wealth through crooked means. But societies are different in their abilities to curb this phenomenon which has come to be called corruption. The effectiveness of any national effort to fight the harmful phenomenon corresponds, to a great extent, to the sophistication, development and transparency of its public institutions. In other words, democratic societies are generally more efficient in ensuring abidance by the law.

Corruption is a plague from which democratic and undemocratic societies suffer. The difference is that in undemocratic societies, embezzlement, graft and nepotism flourish at a faster pace because of the lack of mechanisms that allow for investigating the way people, including government officials, conduct their business.

In democracies the transparency and accountability under which public officials have to operate necessarily imply a greater degree of control over corrupt practices. And it is in this light that the debate about corruption in Jordan should proceed. Corruption will exist as long as man does. The ability to control it, however, will grow as fast as the process of institutionalising democracy. Corruption can be minimised through the enforcement of legislation that will end individuals' ability to make decisions without having to explain them to any other person; that will allow for investigating of officials' wealth and will articulate more clearly the mechanisms through which government agencies should do their job, in terms of awarding contracts, licences, etc. But the impact of these measures will remain minimal until our democratic institutions have matured. The systems of checks and balances on the work of the government and the way it conducts business in more advanced societies come not just from the law. They derive from the workings of their own civic societies and from officials who are encouraged to expose corruption under the protection of the law.

The media plays no small role in the fight against corruption. That, however, requires empowering the media with access to public documents and information that deal with issues of public interest. This is why it is absurd that the current debate about the role of the press in the country did in no way point to the importance of giving the press more access to public information.

One of the truly effective ways to ensure the success of the fight against corruption is to force a higher degree of transparency and accountability vis-a-vis public officials. The job can be facilitated by strengthening democracy and its institutions.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

TAREQ MASARWEH, a writer in Al Ra'i, Sunday criticised the Israeli authorities for barring hundreds of Jordanians from entering the West Bank to take part in Nablus celebrations of liberation. Neither the Jordanians nor the Palestinians should accept this offence lest it becomes the norm in Israel's treatment of visitors to the West Bank in the future, said the writer. The Israelis who prevented the Jordanians from going to Nablus wanted to punish Nablus youth who threw stones on the withdrawing Israeli forces and wanted to prove that Israel still holds the upper hand in dealings between the Palestinians and the other Arabs, said the writer. He said that perhaps the Israelis wanted to send a message to the Jordanians that they should accept a confederation with the Palestinians if they with to visit their brethren in the West Bank and wanted to deny the Palestinians the joy of meeting with their Jordanian brothers before such confederation has emerged. The writer said that Israel's actions against the Jordanians also served as a signal to Jordan that the withdrawal of Israeli forces should not be interpreted as a victory for the Palestinians or the start of the total liberation of the occupied lands in Palestine.

IF SYRIA wants to go along the path of peace with Israel, it will now face the prospect of halting all Lebanese resistance activity from South Lebanon against Israel and will have to chart a new strategy for its relations with Iran, said Saleh Qallab, a writer in Al Dostour. Before giving signals that it is ready for peace with Israel, Syria used to employ the Lebanese resistance groups as a tool to make it clear to Israel and the United States that Israel cannot enjoy peace as long as the Golan remains under occupation. But now, as the Golan is being returned, no resistance activity will be expected, said the writer. By making peace with Israel, Damascus will have to convince Tehran that Iranian-backed militia in Southern Lebanon should halt their activities and has to persuade the Iranians to accept the expected peace treaty, continued the writer.

Human Right File

By Dr. Waleed M. Sa'di

'Weapons for wars, tools for peace'

THERE WAS a meeting for the mass media on the sidelines of the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent that was held in Geneva on Dec. 2. The meeting drew participants from major newspapers and television networks from the four corners of the globe. The motto of the meeting, which the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had organised to update reporting on humanitarian law and humanitarian aid, was aptly entitled "Weapons for Wars, Tools for Peace" in a bid to cover most of the implications of armed conflicts, be they local or international.

What received most attention at the start of the two-day symposium was the proliferation of aid agencies, many of them actually competing against one another for recognition and funding. There is so much overlapping in the functions and mandates of national, regional and international organisations offering aid and support to victims of natural and man-made disasters that donor countries have become confused as to which ones they should pick and choose to carry out humanitarian tasks. Some journalists even suggested that there are also many bogus groups competing for funding from countries and charitable organisations, whose legitimacy and accountability remain to be tested. As a matter of fact, the world is now full of institutions and organisations claiming to speak on behalf of victims to the extent that the picture has indeed become confusing.

I suggested the formation of an association or a club which would screen aid agencies and give credentials to only those which are bona fide ones in a bid to help donor countries select the ones that are really deserving of their contributions. Although the idea was not picked up by any of the journalists attending the meeting, it still remains a functional approach to a real problem.

On a more substantive ground, accountability could be the key to drawing a line in the quagmire of unchecked growth in the number of aid agencies. In this vein, I suggested that donor countries have become more sophisticated

cated in their selection mechanism by scrutinising budgets of potential recipients of their donations, with a view of determining the ratio between their administrative expenses and the amount of money that victims actually receive. Admittedly there is a number of international aid agencies where the lion share of their budgets goes for big salaries of high executives that leaves very little for field expenditures.

In this vein it would be interesting to discern the number of executives who would continue to serve international aid agencies if their salaries were slashed right to half what they are. This could be an easy way to determine who is genuinely driven by humanitarian considerations and who is there on the top floors of such international agencies only for the money.

Suppose for a moment all U.N. agencies, which carry out humanitarian functions, recruit people who are dedicated enough to serve for only small remunerations. This would be a sure way of sifting the genuinely motivated personnel from the ones who cannot care less at the end of the day. Surely all people involved in humanitarian functions must also be able to support themselves and their families. Yet in order to separate the highly motivated people from the noncommittal ones, we need to reduce the monetary incentives to such a level where only the highly motivated people remain at the helm of international agencies.

The ICRC actually offers a fine example on both fronts, which all U.N. agencies may wish to follow. To begin with the ratio of administrative expenditures to expenses spent on victims is low in comparison with the budgetary allocations of major international agencies to such items. Secondly the incomes of the people who man the ICRC are also low in comparison with their counterparts in U.N. institutions. No wonder the ICRC enjoys the best reputation in humanitarian endeavours and is constantly held in high esteem by all countries. This is not to mention the impartiality, neutrality and independence of the organisation which make it stand out among all aid agencies operating in the field.

M. KAHL



Europeans and Americans plan to be doing a lot more together

By Peter Tarnoff
and
Joan E. Spero

WASHINGTON — The trans-Atlantic partnership has passed its greatest post-cold war test by ending the Bosnian war. That success presents us with a new and perhaps even tougher challenge — securing the Bosnian peace. It is a challenge which the United States and Europe can only meet together.

Together we have transformed adversaries into allies and dictatorships into democracies. We have built institutions that ensured our security and economic strength. We stood together and won the cold war. The road from war to peace in Bosnia is the most dramatic evidence that the trans-Atlantic partnership remains essential, and the most visible evidence that America remains committed to Europe's security.

It is most important to remember that the impetus to renew and redefine the relationship between the United States and Europe arose from its success. The end of the cold war reflected the triumph of trans-Atlantic ideals. Today Bosnia, until recently a tragic example of post-cold war disintegration, is a potential crucible for deeper pan-European and trans-Atlantic cooperation.

Bosnia underscores a simple fact: Without a strong trans-Atlantic partnership, the prospect of a safer, richer, freer world will fade. A peaceful, prosperous and undivided Europe is within our grasp because of the singular success of our trans-Atlantic partnership.

We must now reshape

our partnership to make it more responsive to current times. That is why, in June, Secretary of State Warren Christopher proposed new initiatives to strengthen economic, political and human ties across the Atlantic. And that is why President Bill Clinton travelled to Madrid this month to launch, together with European Union leaders, a new trans-Atlantic agenda.

The agenda commits the United States and Europe to work together to implement the peace and help war-ravaged Bosnia to recover economically and politically. But it also looks beyond Bosnia, establishing a common agenda for the 21st century.

In 1990, as the cold war was ending, the United States and then European Community agreed on an extensive series of consultations. Now, with a new world to shape, the United States and the European Union are committed to move beyond consultations to joint action in four major areas:

■ Together we will promote peace, development and democracy around the world. In addition to our efforts in Bosnia, we will cooperate to consolidate democracy and market economies in Central

and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

To use scarce resources more efficiently, we will establish a high-level consultative group to coordinate our global development and humanitarian assistance efforts.

We will cooperate to combat nuclear proliferation, most immediately by joint support for the Korean Energy Development Organization.

■ Together we will meet new global challenges. Our top priority is to combat organised crime, drug trafficking and terrorism through increased exchanges of information and expertise between European and U.S. law enforcement agencies and training of law enforcement officials in the new Central and East European democracies.

We will coordinate our positions on major environmental issues, disseminate environmental technologies, and reduce public health risks from hazardous substances. And, we will develop a global early warning and response system for new and re-emerging communicable diseases such as AIDS and the Ebola virus.

■ Together we will build a trans-Atlantic marketplace by reducing or eliminating barriers to our bilateral trade and invest-

ment. Trans-Atlantic economic relations, already the world's largest and freest, can set a standard for liberalisation and regulatory harmonisation that invigorate the world economy. We will negotiate agreements on mutual recognition of product testing and certification and greater customs cooperation. Longer term, we seek to create a trans-Atlantic information society that allows our people to take full advantage of new information technology and services.

■ Together we will build new trans-Atlantic bridges between our citizens. The agenda is also about people. By furthering exchange among our business communities, legislators, educators and students and by using new channels of communication, such as the Internet, we aim to nurture in present and future generations the mutual understanding and shared purpose that have long characterised our relationship.

The new trans-Atlantic agenda is a comprehensive road map for joint action and cooperation. The Madrid summit was only a first step in the process; a new trans-Atlantic consensus can only emerge incrementally as we pursue common goals. By working together and with other Atlantic democracies on this ambitious agenda, we can forestall future Bosnia and strengthen the basis of our own security and prosperity.

The writers are, respectively, U.S. undersecretary of state for political affairs and undersecretary for economic affairs. The article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

Rivalry on Right boosts Turkey's Islamists

By Jonathan Lyons

Reuter

ISTANBUL — Prime Minister Tansu Ciller and her main opposition rival are poised to split Turkey's conservative vote, opening the way for a strong showing by the pro-Islamic Welfare Party (RP) in next Sunday's general poll.

Ms. Ciller's True Path Party (DYP) and Mesut Yilmaz's Motherland (ANAP) generally share a pro-business and pro-European outlook. They compete for many of the same voters.

They have even relied on the same pop star to sign their campaign songs. "Come on, Onward my Turkey" and "Shake it, Mesut".

Yet political analysts say personal animosity has clouded prospects for cooperation, dashing the hopes of big business and others for a grand conservative coalition to lead Turkey into an age of privatisation and global economic integration.

"DYP-ANAP cooperation would have cleared the way for all the pieces in the political jigsaw to fall into their proper place," columnist Hasan Cemal wrote at the weekend in the leading Sabah daily.

"The ambitions of Ciller and Yilmaz have closed that road. The vendetta they are taking part in has, above all, helped Welfare and no one else."

Public opinion polls ahead of the Dec. 24 polls, although heavily restricted by election laws, bear this out.

Four surveys leaked to a Turkish magazine suggest Ms. Ciller and Mr. Yilmaz will gather some 35 to 40 per cent of the vote between them — more than one-and-a-half times that of the Islamist RP.

The same surveys put the RP either in first place with a narrow plurality, or in second place just behind Mr. Yilmaz's ANAP, founded by the late president Turgut Ozal to modernise Turkey.

Indeed, the Commission has decided to substantially revise the management method of the Med Media programmes — of which Med Media is a part — in order to better accommodate the following:

— The consensus reached by the 27 parties in the recent Barcelona Ministerial Conference (Nov. 27/28) on the cooperation of the civil society as an essential element of Euro-Mediterranean relations. This is a fundamental political resolution which gives increased dimension and recognition to this form of cooperation.

The strong demand for this sort of cooperation, which is manifested by European and Mediterranean civil societies, and which calls for a more structured organisation compared to the previous pilot phase.

— The transparency requirement and need for rigorous procedures for the implementation of the decentralised cooperation programmes.

For these reasons, the Commission is concerned with ensuring effective and accurate follow up to the Barcelona conference, which has given precise directives to its services in order to take into account all the above considerations. In this framework, a renovated management mechanism of the decentralised cooperation programmes will be put into force.

Yves Gazza, Head of delegation, Delegation of The European Commission, Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Part of long-term Jordanian-German research project Archaeologists probe mysteries of earliest human villages in Feinan region

This is the second of a two-part series on recent archaeological research in the Feinan area in south Jordan. The first part, which appeared on Saturday, reviewed the results of recent survey and excavation work by a British team.

By Rami G. Khouri
Special to the Jordan Times

WADI FEINAN has been settled and exploited by human beings for thousands of years, mainly due to its substantial copper deposits. The archaeo-metallographic history of this area has been under study since the mid-1980s by a team from the Jordanian Department of Antiquities and the German Mining Museum at Bochum, co-directed by Drs. Mohammad Najjar and Andreas Hauptmann. Their research has primarily identified copper mining and smelting operations from the Chalcolithic Period through the early Islamic era (from c. 4500 BC until the Ayyubid-Mamluk period), but one of their unexpected discoveries has been two Neolithic villages that were permanently settled as far back as the early 7th Millennium. Recent excavations of these Neolithic sites by a Jordanian Department of Antiquities team headed by Dr. Mohammad Najjar have revealed new information about early human settlements in south Jordan, while also challenging some scholarly assumptions about the association of flint tools with certain economic and social activities.

In 1986 the Jordanian/German team identified ancient wall and floor lines on the side of a small mound that was being eroded by the annual floods of the Wadi Feinan itself. Closer inspection of the



Nearly 9000-year-old standing wall remains from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B village at Ghwair (Photo by M. Najjar)

arranged around a courtyard. Typical of this period were rectangular structures with gently curving walls and rounded corners. Some houses had flagstone pavements and mud-plastered floors and walls, with some traces of red paint. In several houses, large rooms (over 4x4 metres) from the earlier major phase had been transformed in the second phase into much smaller rooms (1x1.5 metres) by the construction of relatively thick stone partition walls with small doorway "entrances".

The earlier of the two sites, Ghwair I, is located within a wide bend on the south bank of the Wadi Ghwair, one of the tributaries of Wadi Feinan. It covers a very large area of some 20,000 square metres, comprising two terraces, the lower of which was used in the Roman-Byzantine period. The Pre-Pottery Neolithic village occupies some 6,000 square metres, on the western part of the upper level of the hillside site; the eastern part contains the remains of an Early Bronze Age II c. 3000-2700 BC copper smelting site.

Three excavation probes in 1993 revealed two major architectural phases, with houses comprising rooms

all the houses seem to have been cleaned by their inhabitants before they were vacated for some unknown reason, because all the plastered floors were very clean, as were the associated storage pits.

The people who lived in this Pre-Pottery Neolithic Village were pioneers in one of the most significant transformations in human history — the so-called Neolithic Revolution, in which small bands of nomadic hunter-gatherers gradually settled down into permanent, year-round hamlets and villages that lived off cultivated farming and domesticated livestock. This was a rather protracted affair as revolutions go, for it occurred over a time span of nearly four thousand years, with the earliest substantial, permanent villages appearing in the historical record around 8500 BC. Pre-Pottery Neolithic settlements are known from several parts of Jordan



A Pottery Neolithic period terracotta human figurine from Tell Wadi Feinan (Photo by M. Najjar)

(notably Ain Ghazal in Amman, Wadi Shueib near Salt, and Beidha and Basta in the Petra region).

The residents of Pre-Pottery Neolithic Wadi Feinan made and used a series of flint tools, mainly blades (knives, sickles), arrowheads and borers that are very close to the chipped stone industry at Neolithic Beidha (north of Petra, about a half-day's walk up into the highlands from Feinan). The ground stone tools industry — primarily for processing agricultural produce — included mortars, grinding slabs, and trough querns. Some stone "bowls" had traces of lime plaster and hematite (a red pigment), suggesting to Dr. Najjar that some of the ground-stone items were used for more than one purpose.

"Small finds included a few beads made from bone, stones and shells (but not the locally abundant green copper ore); two small stone human figurines and five clay figurines (which were purposely baked); and smaller fragments of animal figurines (possibly representing a bull, a bird, and ibex horns). The discovery of five pottery sherds in the latest architectural phase hints that the residents of Neolithic Wadi Feinan may have been experimenting with ceramics production as early as the Middle Pre-Pottery Neolithic B period (c.1st to 4th Centuries AD).

Dr. Najjar believes that the contradictory evidence provided by the lithic and ground stone finds at Ghwair I may force us to revise widespread assumptions that certain classes or types of tools were automatically associated with certain economic activities."

The abundance of arrowheads, for example, would ordinarily indicate a hunting economy; but this is contradicted by the almost total absence of scrapers

and choppers that were used to process meat. Also, Dr. Najjar says, the inhabitants of Ghwair I do not seem to have displayed a typical "hunter" lifestyle, given their impressive, well-built and sometimes even two-storey houses finished with plastered and painted walls and floors. The abundance of borers would hint at a major head-making industry, but this is contradicted by the relatively few beads found there. It is possible, Dr. Najjar warns, that these hypotheses may be biased or incorrect due to the relatively small area of the site that was excavated. Evidence of plentiful copper and other metals or meat-processing facilities may exist in other parts of the site that have not been examined.

Tell Wadi Feinan/Wadi Araba: Karly Levantine Potters

Dr. Najjar's excavations in 1988 and 1990 at the latter of the two Neolithic villages in the Feinan region — Tell Wadi Feinan/Wadi Araba — revealed a site extending some 120 metres east-to-west, with its southern fringe totally destroyed by levelling for orchards in the Roman-Byzantine period. Three main occupational phases were identified, the first two around 4500-4000 BC and the third in the Roman-Byzantine period (c.1st to 4th Centuries AD).

Among the architectural

remains were a building complex covering some 150 square metres; it included two large rooms (one c. 8x5 metres) and a large walled courtyard east of the rooms measuring 10x7 metres. Many fragments of stone wall lines, benches, doorways and other architectural features were exposed, but few intact structures were found due to the deterioration that has occurred over time. The floors of the houses were

made either of mud or pebbles, and most were associated with hearths and pits. No evidence has been found yet of plastered floors or burials beneath floors that are known from other Neolithic sites in Jordan.

The residents of this village, already able to draw on a settled legacy of several thousand years, were among the first humans in the world to make and use pottery, though their production techniques (firing, decoration) were understandably rudimentary. Recognisable pottery forms excavated there include coarse jars and deep bowls whose surfaces were embellished with thumb impressions and rope decorations, and whose soft consistency reflects the low temperatures at which they were fired.

The villagers' flint tools included typical Neolithic assemblages of sickle blades, scrapers, knives, sharpeners, chisels and borers — but with a notable absence of arrowheads and axes. Other small finds included bone tools, shells, stone beads, spindle whorls, mace heads, loom weights, and clay and stone human figurines. Copper ore fragments were found in several parts of the site, but no copper objects or evidence of smelting have been identified yet. It is possible that these may be located in parts of the site that have not been explored, or that were washed away in the adjacent wadi.

These two excavations in the Wadi Feinan region have been sponsored and directed by the Jordanian Department of Antiquities, with funding from the Department of Antiquities and the Volkswagen Foundation (Germany), and logistical assistance from the Institute of Archaeometallurgy and the German Mining Museum (Bochum) and the German Protestant Institute for Archaeology (Amman).

Perry due

here Jan. 3-5

(Continued from page 1)

to do whatever" it can "to support Jordan because it is in (U.S.) national interests."

Mr. Christopher said U.S. military assistance to Jordan would also come in the form of equipment in what is known as, drawdown — appropriating from stocks already available with the Defence Department either in the U.S. itself or with American forces stationed outside the country.

The U.S. Congress is expected to approve a bill that would clear the way for the supply of equipment, Mr. Christopher said, adding that Mr. Perry, the defence secretary, would visit Jordan in January for talks with King Hussein to "analyse Jordan's needs."

The official source told the Jordan Times on Monday that the visit was originally scheduled for Jan. 3 and 4 but that the U.S. side had subsequently requested that it be extended by another day to include Jan. 5.

Jordan has also sought military assistance from France. French Defence Minister Charles Millon visited Jordan this month for discussions of the Kingdom's request for spare parts for its 30 plus MiG fighters.

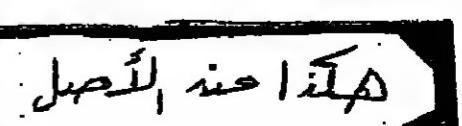
A four-member French team is stationed in Jordan to service and maintain the fighters but the arrangement does not include spare parts and hence the Jordanian request.

Mr. Millon visited facilities of the Royal Jordanian Air Force for a first-hand look at the general status of the fighter jets and to discuss the nature of the Kingdom's needs.

Jordanian and French officials are expected to meet soon to discuss the issue.

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King visits Maan palace

(Continued from page 1)
used to show historic films on development witnessed in Jordan since its establishment.

King Hussein voiced admiration of the works of the committee and expressed hope that the palace will become a centre of culture and a source of historic information.

The King was received at the palace site by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Marwan Qasem, Maan Governor Hussein Habashini, Maan police Director Colonel Musleh Mahadeen, Agaba Railway Corporation Director General Mohammad Mohieddin, Maan Mayor Musa Khalaf and other senior officials.

Also on Sunday, King Hussein, the supreme commander of the Armed Forces,

Talks described as useful

(Continued from page 1)

North Africa economic summit that was held in Amman. His Majesty King Hussein, after his return from Israel where he attended the funeral of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in early November, criticised the work of professional associations and called on them to leave politics for politicians.

While the professional associations say the issue at stake at present is the future of the associations themselves, especially after the King voiced his dissatisfaction with their performance, they insisted that they would adhere to their anti-normalisation policy since it is based on resolutions adopted by the associations' general assemblies. They have no intention, Mr. Nasser said Sunday, to change these resolutions.

If the associations expect any member for normalising relations with Israel, "then he/she has the right to contest the decision in court," Mr. Nasser said.

The ten associations which attended the meeting with the prime minister agree on the position, he said.

We have not threatened our members but we have reminded them of the resolutions adopted by the general assembly regarding normalisation with Israel," said Azza Huneidi, vice-president of the Engineers Association.

The government and the

Peres to accept Syrian demand

(Continued from page 1)

President Hosni Mubarak and Mr. Christopher expressed high hopes for Israel and Syria's renewed peace talks.

"President Mubarak and I feel these new negotiations provide a new opportunity for progress and we are looking for Masbarak's support in the process," Mr. Christopher said at a joint press conference with the president.

"It is more than procedure," Mr. Barak told army radio Sunday. "It is how to ensure that the procedure and the correct character of the entry into discussions will not be damaged when substance is reached."

Mr. Christopher, in answer to a reporter's question, said substance also came up during his four hours of meetings with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad in Syria but that at this point "the outcome is primarily procedural."

Syria said Israel must take practical action if the resumed talks were to achieve peace in the Middle East.

"It is important not to waste the chance of the resumption of talks to achieve just and comprehensive peace," the official daily Tishreen said.

"Achieving peace needs practical Israeli actions and a commitment to all international legitimacy resolutions..." it added.

"It is also important to seriously contribute to lead these talks to their sought aims and goals to let the region enter, after ending occupation, into a new age of security and stability," the newspaper added.

In Cairo, Egyptian Presi-

(Continued from page 1)

dom's keenness to preserve the integrity of Iraqi territory and the unity of Iraqi people and to ensure an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people.

Mr. Ammarin said the foreign minister voiced Jordan's interest in resolving the Iraqi problem within an Arab framework to avoid internationalising it.

He added that the minister said Jordan was ready to host an Iraqi opposition conference to detach it from any international influence that might harm Iraqi sovereignty.

The deputy added that the minister said Jordan had shown good intentions towards Kuwait and did all it was requested to do to improve ties with the emirate, strained since the 1990 invasion, and received with relief

the resumption of telephone and mail links with the emirate.

The minister, according to Mr. Ammarin, also briefed the committee on the deportation of the third secretary in the Iranian embassy in Amman, criticising the work of professional associations and called on them to leave politics for politicians.

While the professional associations say the issue at stake at present is the future of the associations themselves, especially after the King voiced his dissatisfaction with their performance, they insisted that they would adhere to their anti-normalisation policy since it is based on resolutions adopted by the associations' general assemblies.

"Peace has been imposed on all the region. We understand and we deal with these issues with flexibility," he told the Jordan Times. "We are not going to be part of it, but we cannot at the same time ignore what is happening."

The government and the

associations expressed satisfaction at the outcome of the meeting, describing it as constructive and good, especially because it helped eliminate misunderstandings over many issues.

The meeting also covered the case against Mr. Shbeilat, the "interference" of the executive authority in the associations' work and the draft laws and regulations that the associations have submitted to the council of ministers but have not yet been approved.

"We presented several draft laws and regulations that govern the work of professional associations four years ago but we have not received an answer yet," Mr. Haneidi said.

The prime minister promised to speed up work on the draft laws.

As to Mr. Shbeilat's case,

Sharif Zeid said the case is in the hands of the judicial authority which has the final say. However, he said, the executive authority will not interfere in the judicial procedures.

The premier, according to Mr. Nasser, also promised that the executive authority would "not cancel any seminar or conference."

"It was a very useful and positive meeting," said Mr. Nasser. "We have always insisted on the need to hold dialogue with the government to eliminate misunderstandings. We conveyed our wish to the premier to meet with him regularly and to meet with the King too."

The government and the

associations expressed satisfaction at the outcome of the meeting, describing it as constructive and good, especially because it helped eliminate misunderstandings over many issues.

During the seminar, experts from Hong Kong, Singapore, Uganda, Bolivia, the United Kingdom and the U.S. exchanged views with decision-makers, public figures, members of Parliament and journalists and recounted the experience of their countries in fighting corruption.

Participants stressed that the experience of other countries could not be a model to be emulated and Jordan needs to develop its own strategy according to its own experience.

Britain, which withdrew from the former South Yemen in 1967, retained control over the islands until the 1970s, then handed them over to the South Yemeni authorities.

The experience of other

countries, especially those with the same political and social structure, is useful for assessing and correcting the situation," said Laila Sharaf, a member of the Senate. She added that Jordan needs a major "surgery" of the social, economical and ethical structure of the country.

Mr. Touq said that the experiences of countries which have been fighting corruption for many years will help Jordan.

At the same time, he said, Jordan "knows where it is headed."

Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, in a speech delivered on his behalf by Mr. Touq, on Sunday, reaffirmed the government's commitment to fighting cor-

ruption at all levels.

The two-day seminar was the second such event held in two months. Throughout the deliberations of the two gathering, senior government officials implicitly conceded that corruption exists at official levels in the Kingdom but that the executive authority was exerting all efforts to fight it.

The official source told the Jordan Times on Monday that the visit was originally scheduled for Jan. 3 and 4 but that the U.S. side had subsequently requested that it be extended by another day to include Jan. 5.

Jordan has also sought military assistance from France. French Defence Minister Charles Millon visited Jordan this month for discussions of the Kingdom's request for spare parts for its 30 plus MiG fighters.

A four-member French team is stationed in Jordan to service and maintain the fighters but the arrangement does not include spare parts and hence the Jordanian request.

Mr. Millon visited facilities of the Royal Jordanian Air Force for a first-hand look at the general status of the fighter jets and to discuss the nature of the Kingdom's needs.

Jordanian and French officials are expected to meet soon to discuss the issue.

Japan grants \$80m loan

(Continued from page 1)

(ERDL), totalling also \$80 million, which aims at supporting improvement measures for the trade and investment environment in Jordan, to make the country a more open and more investment-oriented economy."

The \$215 million Japanese loan, coupled with the \$80

million credit from the

Majority of Jordanians suffer from high prices

By Samir Hijawi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The majority of Jordanian families are nowadays complaining about the ever-continuing increase in the price of various commodities which, according to the Jordanian Consumer Protection Society (JCPS), rose by an average of 12 per cent over last year's figures.

A JCPS' recent survey has shown that non-subsidised foodstuffs and children wear rose by 22.7 per cent, stationery by 23.3 per cent, white meat by 11.6 per cent, red meat by 7.2 per cent and tissue paper by 17.5 per cent.

Bassam Aqrahawi, a supermarket assistant and father of four, says prices rise constantly making it difficult for family breadwinners to make both ends meet. "My income remains at a standstill and I feel like going through an endless dark tunnel because my debts increase due

to the rise in prices which are making it hard for me even to meet the minimum requirements of my family," Mr. Aqrahawi said.

"My family of six requires at least JD 240 a month in addition to rent but I do not earn this much, and I believe that only a few in this country can make both ends meet," he added.

Haj Khalil Samhouri, a street vendor who supports a 14-member family, says that most commodities required by his family are out of his reach due to the mad spiralling of prices. But, he adds, his children are earning and supporting his income with JD 100 a month.

The problem with my job is that it is not constant and my income drops in winter. The sharp rise in prices of basic commodities this year created new problems for my family. To make matters even worse the Ministry of Supply has placed me within the high income category and

refused to issue me food coupons to enable me to buy subsidised foodstuffs," said Mousa Khalil, a tile mason.

"We had hoped that the Amman economic summit would bring with it relief to the poor but it turned out that it was all a mirage because our living conditions are from bad to worst all the time," said Mr. Mousa.

About her living conditions she says: "Our family of 12, live in a two-room house and we barely are able to pay rent and the electricity bill. To make things worse, the government has deprived us of the food coupons. My husband is not a minister earning JD 500 a month."

Abdullah Ahmad Abdulla, a seller of used clothes, says: "My eight-member family is living frugally as a result of the high prices. We stopped buying table eggs after the recent hike in egg prices and I buy one chicken every week for the whole family."

According to Mr. Abdullah, the problem lies with the

stop to the employment of non-Jordanian workers in the country so that Jordanians can live a decent life."

Umm Hassan, a housewife, says: "I buy used clothes for my children for the coming religious feast because I cannot buy new garments for them."

About her living conditions she says: "Our family of 12, live in a two-room house and we barely are able to pay rent and the electricity bill. To make things worse, the government has deprived us of the food coupons. My husband is not a minister earning JD 500 a month."

Mohammad Obeidat, the JCPS president, says: "A family with less than a JD 150 monthly can buy only 75 per cent of its basic needs while those earning up to JD 299 cannot buy 12 per cent of their needs and those earning up to JD 449 cannot buy 7.6 per cent of their real needs."

According to Ministry of Planning studies conducted in 1992, the rate of abject poverty stood at 14 per cent and that 30 per cent of the total population live under the poverty line, noted Dr. Obeidat.

He said that the price of 70

commodities has risen to unprecedented levels during 1995 reaching in some cases 52 per cent over the previous year.

The Ministry of Planning has estimated the average rise in prices in November alone at JD 13, a very big rise for the majority of the limited income groups.

Dr. Obeidat attributes the high rise in prices to "greediness" on the part of certain merchants who have a monopoly over foodstuffs citing as an example the price of coffee which has dropped by half on the international market while the prices here remained unchanged.

He also attributed the rise in prices to the protection given by the government to certain commodities, a move that has served the greediness of certain merchants, and the government's failure to control prices and also the absence of a special law on the protection of the consumers.

India considers guiding foreign investment

NEW DELHI (Agencies) — Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao was quoted as saying his government was considering requiring foreign investors to set aside a share of their money for social spending.

Mr. Rao told a public meeting in the central town of Aagash that under the proposal, foreign investors would have to earmark one per cent of the cost of their projects for facilities such as schools, roads and hospitals, the Press Trust of India said.

Mr. Rao, who was in Aagash to lay the foundation stone for a \$1.6 billion refinery promoted by Oman, said the proposal would help people in regions where foreign firms were setting up plants.

The plan was in the final stages of consideration, the news agency quoted Mr. Rao as saying.

Opposition parties have criticised Mr. Rao, who launched an economic reform programme in 1991, of ignoring the poor and minorities in favour of rich multinationals setting up businesses in India.

Recently Mr. Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh chided foreign direct investors for not pumping enough money into India's economy.

Mr. Singh said changes in labour laws giving employers more latitude to hire and fire workers would also have to wait along with the establishment of a regulatory framework for takeovers.

The finance minister stressed that the economic reforms begun after Mr. Rao took power in June 1991 were here to stay, regardless of whether Mr. Rao's Congress (I) Party won the elections expected to take place in March or April.

"The direction of economic reforms is not a controversial subject in our country," he said.

Mr. Singh also said that the government was determined to bring about a further reduction in the fiscal deficit, estimated to be 5.5 per cent of gross domestic product in fiscal 1995-96, which began in April.

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HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get in touch with those whose ideas are quite different to your own, and you gain valuable knowledge. Get your wardrobe in order.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 18) Be tactful in dealing with your partner since there is apt to be a great deal of activity in various spheres.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 19) This is a good day to get into worldly activities and know what is going on around you so that you know how best to proceed later tonight.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Get at those weekend duties which need your personal consideration and save time during the next week.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You know just what will make you most happy today, so turn your thoughts and action in such direction.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) You have to be calm and considerate at home today otherwise a battle can occur at the drop of a hat.

LIBRA: (September 22 to October 21) Be more concerned with what you believe in and plan for life more intelligently. If you go out to visit good friends today, use much care on the road.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You are apt to be too greedy today in going after practical affairs, so tone down and be reasonable.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You have many personal needs today, but don't be forceful with others in order to gain them for your progress.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You feel stifled and want to get out to new avenues of expression today, but first keep any promises you have made.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You desire seeing as many friends as you can and should do so today, since much good can come of this.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Curb your outside activities today so that you do not over-tire yourself. Take time for needed meditation.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

Cuban minister eyes 1996 with guarded optimism

HAVANA (AFP) — Cuba's economy should show modest growth in 1996 after four years of economic free fall and a slight turnaround last year, Economy Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez said in an interview.

Growth in 1996 should build on the 0.7 per cent rate last year, though without "spectacular leaps," Mr. Rodriguez was quoted as saying in the weekly La Havana Opiniones.

With the collapse of its economic support, the former Soviet Bloc, the Caribbean island's gross domestic product plunged about 37 per cent between 1989 and 1993, according to government data.

But in 1994, Cuba's economy grew 0.7 per cent, and official estimates for this year put the expansion figure at an optimistic maximum of three per cent, with no minimum mentioned.

"The shortfalls are still substantial," Mr. Rodriguez said. "There is still a long way to go to achieve the levels that are necessary in a series of goods such as food, services, such as transport, and electric power production."

"We have a series of unresolved problems in the economy," Mr. Rodriguez said.

European Union urged to supply technology to Arab Gulf countries

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The European Union (EU) should take advantage of new measures in Arab Gulf states to protect intellectual property by setting up projects that will help them acquire technology, a regional study has said.

The study said the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) needed technology to expand their limited industrial sector and reduce reliance on highly volatile oil earnings which provide for the bulk of their income.

"GCC states have shown sincere intentions to deepen technological cooperation with the EU by enforcing laws to protect copyrights and intellectual property," the Riyadh-based GCC said in the study. "EU states should in turn show sincere intentions... They should encourage their companies to invest in the GCC to ensure transfer of technology."

The study is the latest in a series of GCC calls on its main economic partner, the EU, to help Gulf states acquire industrial technology through the establishment of joint projects in the oil-rich region.

But the EU and other industrial giants have been reluctant to set up large ventures in the GCC on the

grounds that it is a relatively small market and investment laws are restrictive concerning foreign ownership.

The two sides have held several meetings, the latest of which was in Oman last month. But they have failed to reach agreements on joint enterprises.

An EU study published in November said European companies did not consider the Middle East a priority in investment due to political risks and inadequate investment laws. It said investment opportunities were more attractive in Japan, the United States, eastern Europe and the Pacific region.

"We should stress that if the EU countries continue to hesitate in facilitating the transfer of technology to the GCC, our countries can obtain the required technology from other sources," the GCC secretary said.

"GCC states do not need EU projects which do not serve comprehensive development. So, cooperation

between the GCC and the EU should be based on a balanced and equal relationship that will serve the interests of both," it added.

It said GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — were among the top investors in the EU and they accounted for nearly 43 per cent of the total EU exports to the Middle East.

Over the past decade, GCC imports from EU states averaged nearly \$19 billion, accounting for around one third of its total imports. The six members are also the top oil suppliers to the EU, with crude exports of more than four million barrels per day, a figure set to grow in the near future.

GCC states, which control around 45 per cent of the world's proven crude reserves, are concentrating on industrial development because other non-oil sectors are limited given their desert nature.

They have pumped more than \$40 billion into non-oil industries but the sector has remained relatively small as it covers mainly light products.

Official estimates showed GCC non-oil exports, including petrochemicals, stood at around \$15 billion in 1994, less than a quarter of the group's crude exports. Their contribution to the gross domestic product also did not exceed 10 per cent compared with more than 30 per cent for the oil sector.

"GCC and EU countries should set up a joint institution for scientific research to develop technological cooperation between them. Such an institution should encourage and finance projects that serve both sides," the study said.

JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RAOAM

DIVORCE COURT

Yours feel Lars celebrated

DARB

CHERIP

MARPHE

A DIVORCEE OFTEN BECOMES THIS.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: A

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: SHINY TACKY JUGGLE UNCLAO

Answer: What the doctor considered an on-stage emergency — A CASTING CALL

THE Daily Crossword

by Chuck Deodene

ACROSS

1 Type of bean

5 Audacity

10 Frei

14 War god

15 Egyptian peninsula

16 Bunny

17 "Shaq Attack" site

20 Confused situation

21 Wams

22 Wide sash

24 Process ore

25 Sound amplifier

29 Tease the hair

33 Ancient

34 Paradise

35 River to the Caspian Sea

36 Win easily

38 Sing, in a way

41 Radial

42 Copycat

43 Part of O.E.D.

45 Diansi

Anais —

46 "Tonight Show" host

47 Installed temporarily

50 Hoofbeats

52 Desert robe

53 Glossy labrics

55 Bert's puppet pal

59 Religious sect member

63 Stravinsky

64 Temporary home

65 Discharge

66 "The — of Summer"

67 Composer Jule

68 Flower

DOWN

1 Places for experiments</p

'Sell' is the word as EU promotes the euro

MADRID (R) — After agreeing this weekend to call their future currency the euro, European Union (EU) leaders are gearing up for the next hard job: Selling it to the public.

"We couldn't do the marketing before we had a name for the product," EU

Monetary Affairs Commissioner Yves-Thibault de Silguy told reporters. "We will now launch a major campaign."

It may not be an easy sell. Citizens in those countries that qualify for the euro will have to adjust to the new money in a three-year period

from 1999 until their national money is entirely phased out in 2002.

When France, for instance, switched to 100 times more valuable "nouveaux francs" in 1958, people spent years expressing themselves in familiar, but nonexistent, old francs.

Unfortunately for its promoters, the euro will not have neat, simple exchange rates to the currencies it will replace.

For now, only Finland appears resolutely confident its people have the training to cope with the change — if their country is in shape to join when the day comes in 1999.

"We have had so many currencies during Finnish history — the Swedish krona, the rouble and the markka," Finance Minister Iiro Viinanen told Reuters during the Madrid summit.

Finland was part of neighbouring Sweden for six centuries until 1809 when it became an autonomous grand duchy of Russia. It won full independence in 1917.

Resistance is bound to be greater in countries more attached to their currency.

In Germany, the EU's economic powerhouse, two-thirds of the citizens appear opposed to giving up their beloved Deutsche mark to form the backbone of the euro.

They fear a return of the hyper-inflation of the early 1990s that brought down the Weimar republic and helped fuel the rise of Nazism.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government hopes to convince Germans of the benefits of a common currency with a \$7 million marketing campaign starting in February.

The government will take out advertising in newspapers and magazines and set up town meetings to discuss the future currency, but a spokesman complained that this is "about as much money as a private company would spend to put a new brand of yoghurt on the market."

But even if Mr. De Silguy compares the job of selling the euro with that of launching any product, unlike a new yoghurt or any other commercial venture the euro has not benefited from research and name-tests by a professional firm.

The EU's executive, the European Commission, hopes to overcome the problems and convince people of the benefits of the single currency, so as to reduce their anxieties and ensure they understand the process.

In January, they will hold a three-day roundtable discussion, bringing together former prime ministers and central bankers as well as ordinary Europeans to discuss the merits of a single currency.

The results of the gathering will then be used to launch an

EU-wide campaign to sell the euro, with governments encouraged to use schools, private companies and every available means to promote it.

Meanwhile, British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind said Sunday that huge

uncertainties still surrounded the introduction of a single European currency.

He also said that the choice of euro as the name for the controversial currency was uninspired and cast serious doubt on the ambitious timetable for its introduction.

Financial Jordan Times
Markets In co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (December 11-December 15, 1995)

AMMAN — The U.S. unit traded in narrow ranges against the mark and sterling during last week, while appreciating marginally against the yen. It ended the week 0.16 per cent lower against sterling, 0.22 per cent lower against the mark and 0.76 per cent higher against the yen.

The dollar drifted lower against the yen and the mark Monday, while stabilising against sterling. Reports indicated that dealers refrained from taking new positions as many unclear factors were affecting the direction of the market.

Analysts were not certain on whether the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) would lower interest rates a week from Tuesday, especially if the Congress and the U.S. administration failed to reach a budget deal before the end of the week deadline. They also added that if the two parties failed to reach an agreement before the deadline, another government shutdown would be looming, which might affect dollar exchange rates negatively.

The U.S. unit rose modestly against the mark and the yen Tuesday, while stabilising against the yen. The dollar continued its appreciation that began earlier in the day in Tokyo as the giant U.S. oil company Texaco exchanged 50 billion yen into dollars. Reports indicated that Texaco will sell a total of 200 billion yen by next March to transfer some of its investments in Japan to the United States. Meanwhile, U.S. producer price figures were released to show a higher than expected rise of 0.5 per cent in November, which prompted questions on whether the Fed would ease its monetary policy in the short-term.

The dollar continued its appreciation against the mark Wednesday, while declining a bit against the yen and stabilising against sterling. Reports indicated that trading was quiet as dealers awaited the outcome of the Bundesbank Council meeting the following day. Some analysts indicated that it is more likely that the Bundesbank would wait till next year before easing its monetary policy. Meanwhile, U.S. retail sales were released to show a surprising rise of 0.8 per cent leaving analysts divided on whether the Fed would ease monetary policy during the FOMC meeting the following Tuesday.

The U.S. unit depreciated against other major currencies Thursday. The Bundesbank surprised the market by easing its monetary policy, which encouraged several European bonds, which lent support to European currencies. The dollar was also hurt by profit-taking on short mark position, which were taken in anticipation of Bundesbank easing.

The dollar rebounded against other major currencies at the end of the week, however. The mark lost ground in worries that the Communist Party might win the elections in Russia. Moreover, the mark was affected negatively by news that European countries agreed to name the European currency "euro." Dealers were worried that the news hinted at progress in European monetary union deliberations, which could weaken Germany's strong economy.

Meanwhile, news that no progress was made in the budget battle between Congress and the Clinton administration did not hurt the dollar. Analysts indicated that financial markets are ignoring a potential government shutdown for the second time in less than a month, and concentrated on the issue that lowering the budget deficit is good for the dollar, no matter who has a bigger say in it.

The U.S. unit, thus, ended the week at 1.4433 marks, 102.03 yen and at \$1.565 to the pound.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	Friday Dec. 8 - 1995 Close	Friday Dec. 15 - 1995 Close	Percent Change
Sterling Pound*	1.5340	1.5365	0.16 %
Deutsche Mark	1.4465	1.4433	0.22 %
Swiss Franc	1.1680	1.1634	0.40 %
French Franc	4.9855	4.9655	0.40 %
Japanese Yen	101.25	102.03	(0.76) %

* USD per JTCG

Euro-Currency Interest Rates*			
Dec. 8 - 1995		Dec. 15 - 1995	
Currency	1-Month (%)	1-Year (%)	1-Month (%)
U.S. Dollar	5.81	5.28	5.75
Sterling Pound	6.50	6.18	6.38
Deutsche Mark	4.80	3.62	3.43
Swiss Franc	2.31	1.87	1.81
French Franc	5.25	5.00	5.18
Japanese Yen	0.23	0.46	0.23

Interest rate for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 100,000 or equivalent

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin			
Date: December 17 - 1995			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
U.S. Dollar	0.7080	0.7100	
Sterling Pound	1.0868	1.0922	
Deutsche Mark	0.4901	0.4926	
Swiss Franc	0.6074	0.6104	
French Franc	0.1427	0.1434	
Japanese Yen*	0.6931	0.6966	
Dutch Guilder	0.4376	0.4398	
Swedish Krona	-	-	
Turkish Lira*	0.0444	0.0446	
Belgian Franc	-	-	
For 100	-	-	

* For 100

Steelers clinch 1st round bye, Packers a playoff berth

PITTSBURGH (R) — The streaking Pittsburgh Steelers won their eight consecutive game on Saturday, clinching a first-round bye in the AFC playoffs with a 41-27 victory over the New England Patriots.

The Steelers (11-4), who had already clinched the AFC Central Division title, smashed open a 27-27 game with two touchdowns in the final minute and a half.

With the game tied and looking like it might be headed for overtime, Ernie Mills caught a 62-yard touchdown pass from Neil O'Donnell with 1:28 remaining. Chris Oldham then returned a fumble for a touchdown just 19 seconds later to seal the win and eliminate the Patriots (6-9) from playoff contention.

New England was similarly stung in the first half when Pittsburgh struck for two touchdowns in the final two minutes of the second quarter. Yancy Thigpen caught a 14-yard touchdown pass from O'Donnell and defensive end Preston Buckner returned a Patriots' fumble for a score. O'Donnell completed 14-of-25 passes for 195 yards and two touchdowns.

New England quarterback Drew Bledsoe was 39-of-60 for 336 yards and three touchdowns as he rallied his team from a 24-12 deficit to tie its 27-27 before things unraveled in the end.

"We had about 38 guys play their huts off and about even that I wished we would have left at home," said Patriots coach Bill Parcells. "Mistakes killed us," he continued. "The two turnovers in the last two minutes of the half and the game cost us 14 points and the game."

New England tight end Ben Coates caught 11 passes for 87 yards and two touchdowns. But it was Coates whose fumble after a catch was scooped up by Oldham who scampered 27 yards for the final touchdown.

"We didn't come out and play the type of defence we played all year," said Pittsburgh linebacker Greg Lloyd who forced Coates's fumble.

"We were back on our heels. But we lined up and made the plays we had to."

In New Orleans, Brett Favre passed for four first-half touchdowns to lead the Green Bay Packers to a 34-23 victory over the Saints and playoff berth.

The win was the fifth in six games for the Packers (10-5), who can clinch their first NFC Central Division title since 1972 with as loss or tie by Detroit (8-6) Sunday or a win next Sunday against Pittsburgh.

Favre completed 12-of-18 passes for 203 yards and Robert Brooks had four catches for 105 yards and two touchdowns in the first half when the Packers built a 28-7 lead.

Favre finished 21-of-30 for 308 yards and Brooks ended up with five receptions for 118 yards.

The Green Bay quarterback, who will start for the

NFL STANDINGS

American Football Conference

Eastern Division

	W	L	T	PF	PA
Buffalo	9	5	0	310	287
Miami	8	6	0	337	287
Indianapolis	8	6	0	297	282
New England	6	9	0	287	367
NY Jets	3	11	0	227	349

Central Division

x-Pittsburgh	11	4	0	388	303
Cincinnati	6	8	0	312	324
Houston	5	9	0	297	301
Cleveland	4	10	0	242	322
Jacksonville	3	11	0	251	339

Western Division

x-Kansas City	11	3	0	312	221
Oakland	8	6	0	310	257
Denver	7	7	0	346	297
Seattle	7	7	0	316	330
San Diego	7	7	0	267	282

Eastern Division

x-Dallas	10	4	0	377	258
Philadelphia	9	5	0	283	298
NY Giants	5	9	0	253	292
Arizona	4	10	0	242	364
Washington	4	10	0	271	319

Central Division

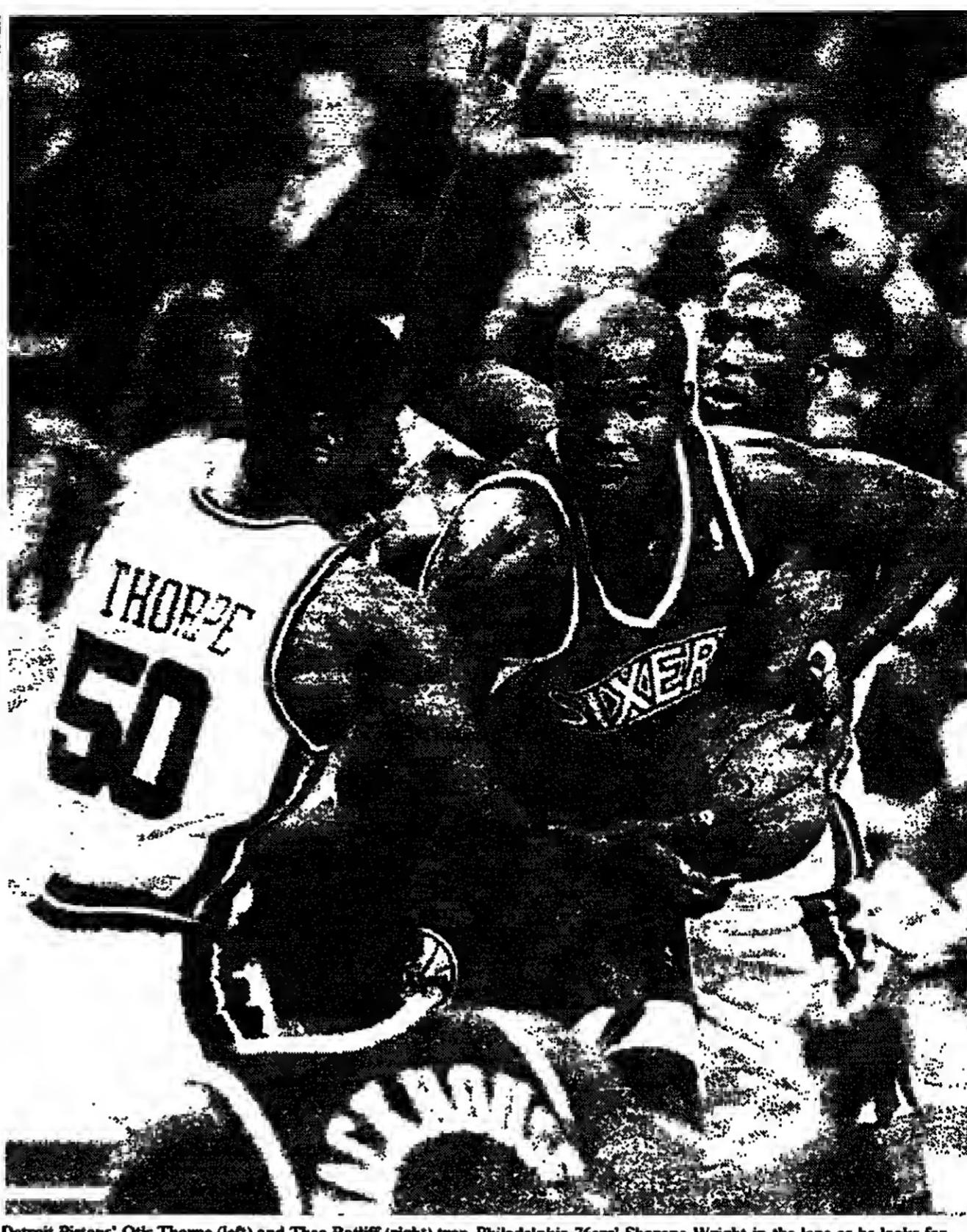
x-Green Bay	10	5	0	380	295
Detroit	8	6	0	355	326
Minnesota	8	6	0	358	321
Chicago	7	7	0	341	336
Tampa Bay	7	7	0	218	267

Western Division

San Francisco	10	4	0	393	280
Atlanta	8	6	0	317	361
St Louis	7	7	0	264	342
Carolina	6	8	0	251	288
New Orleans	6	9	0	307	348

X-Clinched division title

Y-Clinched playoff berth



Detroit Pistons' Otis Thorpe (left) and Theo Ratliff (right) trap Philadelphia 76ers' Sharone Wright in the lane as he looks for some help (Reuters photo)

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but Pavel was superb and showed why he is a cult hero up here."

A first-half stop from Daniel Amokachi was of the highest order but the Czech then excelled himself when Anders Limpar's late effort deflected off Steve Howey.

They were hardly helped by having to call in reserve goalkeeper Czech Pavel Smecek for his first start of the season when a hip injury sidelined Shaka Hislop.

But a first-half goal from England striker Lee Ferdinand proved sufficient to keep Newcastle flying high at the top of the table despite having defender John Beresford sent off shortly before the interval.

Afterwards it was Smecek who Newcastle boss Kevin Keegan singled out for his outstanding display.

"Pavel did tremendously well especially when you realise he came in under such severe pressure," said Keegan.

"It isn't easy to play as well as that in those circumstances

but Pavel was superb and showed why he is a cult hero up here."

A first-half stop from Daniel Amokachi was of the highest order but the Czech then excelled himself when Anders Limpar's late effort deflected off Steve Howey.

"How he kept it out I just don't know," said Keegan. "Maybe the crowd helped by blowing really hard but it was still a great save. I don't think anybody else in the country could have done it."

Keegan had no arguments with Beresford's sending off.

"The rule says that John had to go and although (assistant) Arthur Cox thought he might escape with just a booking we had no arguments with the referee.

"What it meant was that everybody had to work tremendously hard. Every one of them showed they were prepared to battle. They had to stand up and be

42 points from 18 games.

In the constant merry-go-round of changing places behind the north of England club, Tottenham popped up into third but nine points off the pace with a 1-0 win over Wimbledon who have now gone 14 games without a win.

Manchester United are best placed to challenge Newcastle but they face an extremely tough fixture on Sunday with a trip to Liverpool. And even a win there would still leave them four points behind the leaders who have

42 points from 18 games.

In the constant merry-go-round of changing places behind the north of England club, Tottenham popped up into third but nine points off the pace with a 1-0 win over

Wimbledon who have now

gone 14 games without a win.

"His future with us has

always been dependent on

the outcome of allegations

against him connected with his football dealings. That situation has never changed.

"But he has been incre-

ibly honest with us and we

have made our own investiga-

tions too."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Iraq devalues dinar for tourists

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The Iraqi authorities have devalued the tourist rate of the dinar from 600 to 1,000 dinars to the U.S. dollar, a bank official said Sunday. The new rate was intended to "encourage people to use authorised outlets" to change money, the official said. The tourist rate, introduced in 1994, is used by state banks and by licensed exchange houses, which purchase foreign currency but do not sell it. Two other rates exist for the dinar — the official rate of 3.2 dinars to the dollar, used by the government, and a black market rate of more than 2,500 dinars to the dollar. The Iraqi currency has been in free fall since the United Nations imposed crippling sanctions on Baghdad following the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The embargo prevents Iraq from exporting oil, which previously provided 90 per cent of its foreign currency revenue.

Bahrain 'ready for war with Qatar'

CAIRO (AP) — Bahrain's minister of defence was quoted Sunday as saying his tiny Gulf nation was willing to go to war with Qatar rather than give up disputed islands to the neighbouring emirate. However, Sheikh Khalifa Ben Ahmad Al Khalifa also said in an interview with the Egyptian opposition daily Al Wafd that Bahrain is ready for political settlement of the dispute. "Qatar claims some one-third of our territories. This is illogical and illegitimate. We told them that this is impossible and it means that we will enter hundreds of wars before giving up even one island," he said. "We hope it will be solved by the politicians because the military has only one solution." Sheikh Khalifa added.

U.S. causing crises to sell arms — Iran

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati accused the United States of creating artificial crises in the Gulf to justify arms sales to the region, Iranian Television reported on Sunday. Even though the main pretext for the presence of foreign forces in the region — Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait — had been removed, foreign fleets were still carrying out "provocative military manoeuvres," Mr. Velayati told a two-day international seminar on the Gulf. Arab countries were also continuing to spend huge sums on these exercises, paying for the dispatch of U.S. forces to the region, he said. The United States was continuing its policy of "dual containment" and maintaining economic pressure and sanctions on Iran in an effort to impose its own policies on the Gulf, he said. Mr. Velayati said Iran was willing to resolve problems and misunderstandings with its neighbours, who he urged to put aside old enmities and false disputes and lay down conditions for friendship and cooperation.

Arafat plans visits to Qatar, UAE

DOHA (R) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat will this week make his first official visit to Qatar and the United Arab Emirates since the strain of the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, Palestinian diplomats said on Sunday. They said the heads of the two Gulf Arab states are expected to hold talks with Mr. Arafat when he visits Doha on Monday and Abu Dhabi on Wednesday. Mr. Arafat, head of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), angered Gulf Arab states by his sympathy for Iraq after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990. Palestinian ties with most Gulf states, except Kuwait, have improved since the crisis. Qatar last month sent a resident representative to the Gaza-based PNA and like the UAE, has recognised new Palestinian passports issued by the authority. Over 10,000 Palestinians, mostly workers and their families, live in Qatar and some 50,000 reside in neighbouring UAE.

Woman given U.S. visa to help brother

CAIRO (AP) — An Egyptian woman denied a U.S. visa despite pleas she must donate bone marrow to save her severely ill brother was given the travel document Sunday after calls from American doctors to the U.S. embassy here. The initial refusal was because the woman, Wedad Asteftanous, did not present the proper medical documents, said embassy spokesman Rick Roberts. "She just applied for a tourist visa, without anything from the hospital, without explaining about the blood matching," Mr. Roberts said. Mrs. Asteftanous was found to have a perfect bone marrow match for her brother, Mauris, 45, a taxi driver in New York. He immigrated to the United States 17 years ago and was diagnosed with acute myelogenous leukemia last year. Dr. John Loscalzo of the hematology-oncology department at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, Long Island, said Mr. Asteftanous would certainly die without the bone marrow transplant.

Cyprus protests U.S. missile sales to Turkey

NICOSIA (AP) — President Glafcos Clerides has protested the sale of U.S. missiles to Turkey, the semi-official Cyprus news agency reported. The sale of 120 Atac missiles to Turkey "is an unfriendly act towards Cyprus," said Mr. Clerides. The missiles, with a range of 165 kilometres, could be used against Cyprus, even if they are based in Turkey and not on the war-divided island, Mr. Clerides was quoted as saying. "How can such a political move by the United States help consolidate feelings of security and stability or assist efforts for a peaceful solution of the problem," he said.

Jewish minor convicted of murdering Arab

TEL AVIV (AP) — A juvenile court on Sunday convicted a Jewish settler teenager of shooting to death an Arab farmer as he tended his West Bank field, Israel Radio reported. The name of the settler, a resident of the West Bank settlement of Shilo, was not revealed because he was being tried as a minor. He was 16 at the time of the murder two years ago. The report said the youth had just completed guard duty early on Dec. 9, 1993, when he took his Uzi submachine-gun into the nearby village of Turmus Aya. There he saw Khamis Abu Awad and his wife Fatma plowing a field, the report said. The settler fired at Abu Awad — who fell from the first bullet moaning in pain — and continued to fire one or two more shots at the man until he died, Israel Radio said. The suspect, an American-born youth, fled to the United States, but after nine months he turned himself in and was extradited to Israel, the report said. He pleaded innocent in court, but was found guilty based on testimony from Fatma Abu Awad, who witnessed her husband's murder, the radio said.

U.N. human rights envoy visits Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — A special U.N. envoy on human rights is on a visit here to investigate the rights situation of religious minorities in Iran, informed sources said Sunday. The U.N. rapporteur for religious intolerance, Abdul Fattah Amor from Tunisia, arrived here Friday and has already held talks with Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. The first U.N. human rights envoy to visit here in four years, Mr. Amor was to meet Sunday with Iran's Chief Justice Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, the sources said. Iran said earlier this month that it would receive U.N. human rights rapporteurs, but warned in advance that any reports must be based on "facts." Four years ago U.N. human rights envoy Reynaldo Galindo Pohl wrote a report critical of the situation in the Islamic republic. Tehran accused him of bias and denied him a visa for further visits. Mr. Galindo Pohl was recently replaced by a Canadian, Maurice Danby Copithorne. A U.N. rapporteur on freedom of opinion and speech, India's Abdur Hussain, is also slated to visit on Jan. 5.

Ex-senator and judge calls for amendments to Constitution

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Former Senator Najib Al Rasbdan called on Sunday for amendments in the Constitution in favour of wider public freedoms and lesser powers for the executive authority.

Mr. Rasbdan, who was speaking at a specialised seminar entitled "For the Sake of a Democratic Jordan" and organised by the Jordanian Democratic Thought Forum, said that introducing amendments to the Constitution were necessary and should go hand in hand with the democratic process.

Mr. Rasbdan proposed an amendment to article seven of the Constitution, which states that personal freedoms are safeguarded. He said the article should be strengthened. The amendment proposed by Mr. Rasbdan stipulate that personal liberties should be safeguarded and no one should be arrested or denied the right

to move except with a court order.

The article should say that any infringement on public liberties guaranteed by the Constitution is a crime and violators should be punished, Mr. Rasbdan said.

"The reason for this amendment," he said, "is that those who have been used to martial law tactics underestimate people's rights and freedoms. They violate them constantly."

"This provision prevents the occurrence of these acts, especially if the penal code is amended to stipulate a deterrent punishment for violations," he added.

Mr. Rasbdan also proposed that the 40 members of the Upper House of Parliament (Senate) be elected rather than appointed by His Majesty the King.

The amendment was seconded by participants and lecturers alike and was described as a major step that should be taken to consolidate democracy in the King.

Mr. Rasbdan also proposed that a paragraph should be added to article 74 which tackles the issue of dissolution of the Lower House of Parliament. He said the government should resign immediately after a dissolution of Parliament and that parliamentary elections should be conducted by a transitional government.

"Any government which has been behind the dissolution of Parliament should not be the one to supervise the procedures of new elections," he said.

Mr. Rasbdan also said that Article 95 which states that ten members or more of the Senate or the House have the right to submit a draft law for discussion should be amended to give the right to any member of either house to submit a proposal.

He also proposed the replacement of the phrase "in accordance with the law" that comes at the end of several articles of the Constitution by

explanatory phrases or rulings.

Ibrahim Anzawi, dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Yarmouk, supported most of Mr. Rasbdan's proposed amendments but called for more.

While Mr. Rasbdan said that the establishment of a constitutional court was necessary and should be included in the Constitution in Article 122 that deals with the Higher Council for the Interpretation of the Constitution, Mr. Anzawi said that a constitutional court should replace the higher council.

Mr. Rasbdan, however, argued that public freedoms and enhancement of democracy mainly depends on the people in power and not on the law.

"It is matter of application," Mr. Rasbdan said. "If you give an unjust law to a fair judge, you ensure the rule of justice," he said. "And vice-versa is true."

Experts propose concrete steps to fight corruption in Jordan

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A two-day seminar ended here on Sunday after adopting a series of recommendations that call for concrete measures within the government and in the legal system to fight corruption.

The recommendations of the seminar entitled "Integrity in Government," organised by the ministries of administrative development and justice and funded by the World Bank, called for developing an employment criteria for appointing high ranking officials, introducing a mandatory assets declaration for new members of the cabinet, establishing a code of ethics for media, parliament and civil servants and ensuring the clarity of laws and regulations.

Minister of Administrative Development Muhideen

Touq said this seminar and a previous one, held last month, were "a national debate" and generated criticism.

Some people claimed that the two seminars were "unnecessary" and described them as "damaging to Jordan's international image," said Mr. Touq.

Rejecting these allegations Mr. Touq stressed that a national strategy against corruption was a precaution.

"We may not have a major problem now, but in 10-15 years' time we might look back and regret not having a national strategy," Mr. Touq said.

Participants from the private sector welcomed the open dialogue on corruption and called on the government to reduce its interventionist policies.

"The less intervention from civil servant the less corruption we will find,"

Hamdi Tabba, a former minister of industry and trade and Chairman of Jordanian Businessmen Association, told the Jordan Times.

Participants stressed that the government should have a long-term strategy to evaluate the areas of "economic illnesses."

"These economic illnesses, such as unemployment, low standard of living and inequality of the distribution of wealth are breeders of corruption," said Basam Saket, a former minister of economy.

He added that if the government leaves matters to the private sector things could improve.

John MacGregor, a senior country officer responsible for the Middle East and North Africa country operations at the World Bank, told the Jordan Times that the bank "will not push" the government in its fight

against corruption.

The reason for such a stand, he said, was that the World Bank believes that the strategy against corruption "must be led by Jordanian minds and hearts."

The World Bank financed the travel costs of experts attending the seminar, but Mr. MacGregor insisted, the event "is not the World Bank's show."

"We will take our proper role and support the initiative taken by the government," said Mr. MacGregor, adding that the bank will not dictate any solutions.

Also from the World Bank, Robert Beschel, a public sector management consultant, said that the draft of a national strategy which was recommended last month and concentrates on the role of the civil servants, media and the judiciary lacks a de-

(Continued on page 7)

Algerian dailies reappear

PARIS (R) — Algeria's independent newspapers returned to newsstands on Sunday after a four-day strike to protest against a government suspension of a sister daily. The papers urged President Liamine Zeroual to protect freedom of the press and said cracking down on independent publications could deprive him of popular support.

The Interior Ministry ordered the French-language daily Liberte to shut down on Dec. 11 for 15 days, blaming it for carrying repeated tendentious information. The newspaper had earlier published a pen-profile of Mr. Zeroual's senior aide, former General Mohannad Betchine.

An Algiers court later convicted the director general and a journalist of the newspaper of repeated publication of false information about a senior official and gave them suspended prison sentences.

Liberate's Director General Outoudert Abrouss was given a four-month suspended prison sentence.

Calling the ministry decision an "arbitrary decision," editors of other independent newspapers replied by shutting down their own papers last Tuesday to protest the measures.

Algeria's authorities have cut for themselves huge powers over the press amid the government's struggle against armed militants bent on turning Algeria into a strict Islamic state.

Up to 40,000 people, including more than 60 journalists and media employees, have been killed in the four-year-old conflict.

Several newspapers were closed for various periods since early 1993 when the authorities tailored a law allowing them to shut publications for what they might be threats to the public order and the country's high interests.

France back on track as strikes run out of steam

PARIS (R) — France's worst wave of strikes for a decade was running out of steam on Sunday and public sector workers seemed ready to ease the pressure on Prime Minister Alain Juppe, at least over Christmas.

SNCF state railways said 50-60 per cent of trains were running in most regions of France and services in the Paris suburbs were also back on track. Nine of 13 lines on the city's underground metro were at least partly functioning.

Eurostar trains from London to Paris via the Channel Tunnel were also running again, although only four trains were expected from Paris to London and three the other way.

On Saturday, hundreds of thousands of people joined anti-government protest marches across the country, led by railway workers claiming to have scored a victory over the government in three weeks of strikes.

A majority of railway workers voted on Friday to start returning to work and some more militant depots voted to join them over the weekend.

The strikes have involved various sectors, including postal services, power supply and schools, but transport shutdowns have had the most visible effect, virtually crippling Paris and biting shops hard ahead of the holiday season.

Mr. Juppe made significant concessions to rail workers by freezing a plan to restructure the SNCF state railways and backing down on reforming pension systems that allow some train drivers to retire at

But the wider public-sector strikes looked to be fizzling out without achieving their main objective, to force Mr. Juppe to ditch controversial welfare reform plans.

Louis Viannet, chief of the communist-led CGT, announced at a mass march in Paris that another day of action was planned for Tuesday, two days ahead of a "labour summit" between union leaders and Mr. Juppe.

Other union leaders were lukewarm about the call, and some suggested that the next round of protests be organised for January, after the Christmas and New Year break.

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Mr. Juppe made significant concessions to rail workers by freezing a plan to restructure the SNCF state railways and backing down on reforming pension systems that allow some train drivers to retire at

50.

The rail workers also won the head of SNCF Chairman Jean Bergougnoux, who resigned on Friday after being criticised by Mr. Juppe for not encouraging dialogue between management and staff.

But Mr. Juppe has managed to keep intact the core of a plan to reform the indexed social security system by raising taxes and tightening controls on healthcare spending and management.

Analysts say the result of 24 days of strikes is a costly draw between government and unions, neither of which has been able to score a decisive victory.

Both the CGT and non-partisan but militant Force Ouvrière appear to have been strengthened by the importance of the strikes and the public support they have attracted.

Mr. Juppe has survived, but his premiership looks threatened. Veteran political commentator Alain Duhamel said his best chance would be to use Thursday's "labour summit" to repair relations with the unions and give a boost to consumer spending.

Mr. Juppe has survived, but his premiership looks threatened. Veteran political commentator Alain Duhamel said his best chance would be to use Thursday's "labour summit" to repair relations with the unions and give a boost to consumer spending.

In an interview with the Associated Press, attorney Artie Aurbach predicted that "in a few days the public in Israel and the world will see the tape."

Mr. Rabin's widow, Leah, told army radio on Saturday that she was not interested in viewing the videotape.

"I did not know that the murder of Yitzhak Rabin was documented by video. And, of course, I do not want to see these pictures. It is too difficult. It is hard enough for me to deal with what has happened," she said.

Battle is on for Rabin murder video

Soccer stars face Alzheimer's risk — survey

LONDON (R) — Soccer stars could be at greater risk than others of contracting Alzheimer's disease after years of heading the ball and being hit in accidental clashes, a scientist says. Dr. Jon Spear said the cumulative effect could cause long-term brain damage similar to that suffered by boxers. "A football weighs about 400 grammes (almost one pound) and can travel at up to 80 miles an hour. This creates a significant force on impact with the head," he said. Dr. Spear, a London consultant in geriatric psychiatry, was quoted in the Sunday Independent as saying: "Football players are also susceptible to concussion as a result of the clash of heads."

He cited Norwegian studies showing that professional footballers were twice as likely as others to show deficits in concentration, memory and judgement. Lawyer Mordechai Offir had said the postponement was necessary to give him time to examine evidence against his client, but the court said proceedings would start Tuesday as planned.

The existence of the videotape was revealed only last week, and the video was shown to the commission investigating the security breakdown that led to Mr. Rabin's death.

"The commercialisation of this is not all pleasant," said Mordechai Kirshenbaum, director of Israel Broadcast Authority that runs the state-owned Channel One television.

"But the archival value of this material for the coming years and Israeli history is very high."

Mr. Kirshen